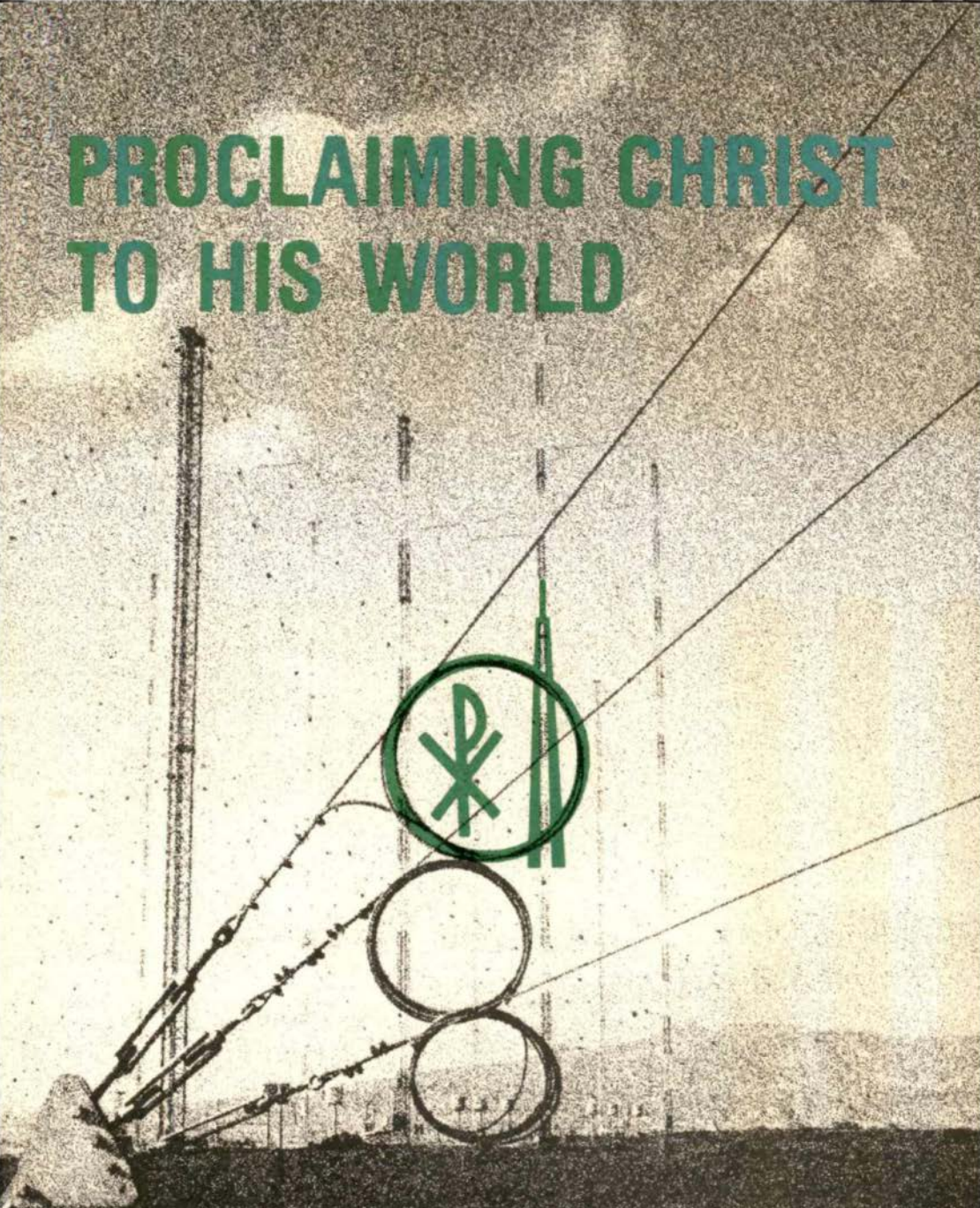
PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD

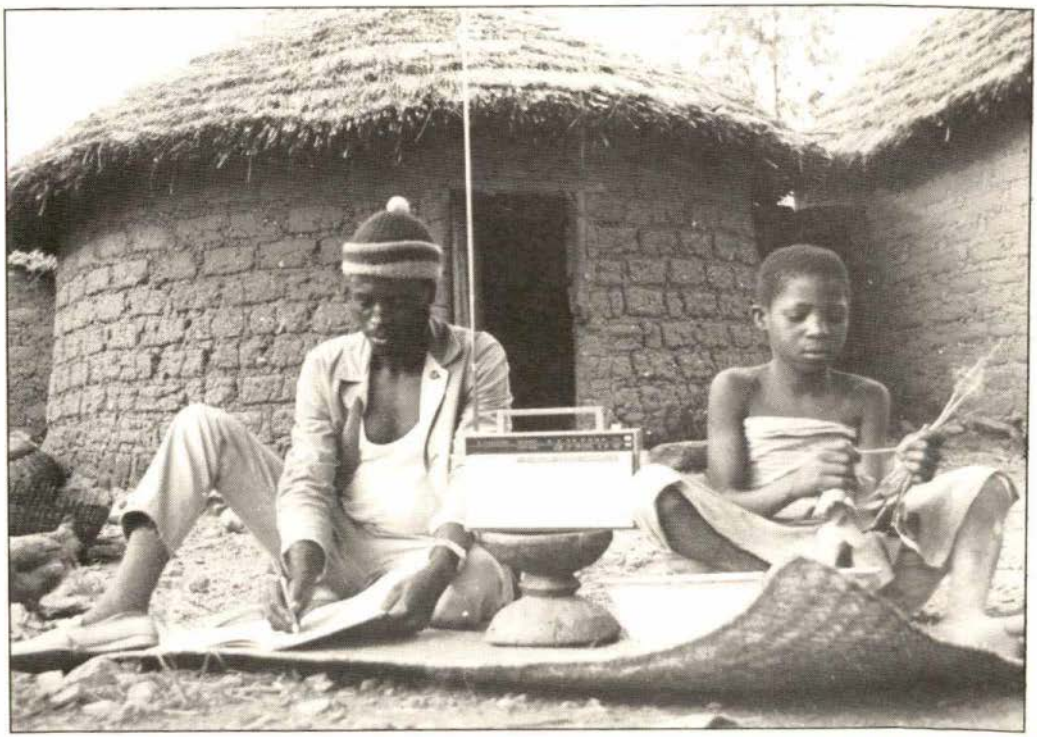


The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel, 1957 – 1977

by Manfred Lundgren

RVOG Audiences

Listeners in Africa, the Middle East and Asia heard programmes in up to 17 languages, produced in as many local studios. Above: Interviewing a Fulani herdsman in West Africa. Below: Receiving RVOG in a Nigerian village.



Front cover: The short-wave antennae at the RVOG transmitter site 30 kilometers from Addis Ababa.

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

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Dear Reader:

The Lutheran World Federation is pleased to provide you with this account of Radio Voice of the Gospel, a unique and important venture in the life of the federation.

This work was written and complied by Rev. Manfred Lundgren at the request of the LWF Commission on Communication.

Additional copies may be ordered at cost (US$ 7.00, DM 17, Sfr 15) which includes postage) from the above address.

We have tried to reach all who share an interest in RVOG, but invite you to mention this work to others. This story is worth hearing.

Yours sincerely

Marc Chambron

Marc Chambron

Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXXVIII

An assignment by the Commission on Communication
of the Lutheran World Federation, Geneva

City Map of Addis Ababa – Copyright © Alemayo Mesfin Esselte Map Service, Stockholm, and RVOG architectural drawings by Eknors Arkitektbyra, Orkelljunga, Sweden, are used with permission.

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Published by the
Department of Communication
THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
150, route de Ferney
Geneva
Switzerland
Printed in the United Kingdom

CONTENTS

		PAGE
LIST OF TABLES		v
PREFACE by Marc Chambron		viii
FOREWORD by Sigurd Aske		xiii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		xvi

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE BEGINNING		10
1.1	THE THREE PARTNERS	10
1.1.1	The Lutheran World Federation	10
1.1.2	The Near East Christian Council and Its Successors	12
1.1.3	The Local Churches and Their Program Studios	15
1.2	THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK	17
1.2.1	The Political Scene	19
1.2.2	Missiological Trends	21
1.2.3	Technological Developments	26
1.3	THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	29
1.3.1	The Vision	30
1.3.2	The Purpose	31
1.3.3	The Structures	33

PART TWO

THE BROADCASTING INSTITUTION		35
2.1	THE PREPARATORY STAGE (1957 - 1959)	35
2.1.1	Initial Actions	35
2.1.2	Search for a Suitable Location	37
2.1.3	Ownership and Partnership	40

		PAGE
2.2	THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE (1960 - 1962)	43
2.2.1	Organizational Structures	43
2.2.2	Party A and B	48
2.2.3	Government Negotiations	52
2.2.4	Initial Executive Personnel	56
2.2.5	Building Construction	58
2.2.6	Technical Installations	66
2.2.7	Capital Investment	70
2.2.8	Area Production Studios	73
	- LWF-Related Lutheran Area Studios	74
	- "Party B"-Related Area Studios	80
	- LUTHERAN HOUR-Related Studios	83
	- Area Studios with Direct Relationship to RVOG	85
2.3	THE OPERATIONAL STAGE (1963 - 1977)	90
2.3.1	RVOG - Station ETLF	90
2.3.2	Administration	93
	- The General Director's Office	95
	- Station Administration Unit	95
	- The Technical Department	96
	- The Program Department	96
	- The Department of Audience Research and Planning	97
	- The News Department	97
	- The RVOG Cabinet	98
	- The LWF Broadcasting Service	98
2.3.3	Personnel	101
	- Recruitment	101
	- Remuneration	107
2.3.4	Broadcasting	109
2.3.5	Finances	113
	- Financial Policies	113
	- Sources of Income	114
	- Development of Operation Costs	119
	- Brief Analysis of Operation Costs	121
	- Some General Remarks	123
2.3.6	Ecumenical Cooperation	124
	- CCIB (1963-1965)	124
	- CCCB (1966-1968)	127
	- WACC (1968-1977)	131
	- Other Ecumenical Partners	135
2.3.7	Government Relations	139
2.3.8	Station Facilities	144
	- Expansion	145
	- Maintenance	146

PAGE

PART THREE

THE RADIO MINISTRY 148

3.1 OBJECTIVES AND BROADCAST STRATEGY 148

3.1.1 Basic Objectives and Their Interpretation 149
- The RVOG Theological Position 149
- Changing Emphasis in Pursuing Defined Objectives 152

3.1.2 Station/Studio Relations and Church Involvement 154
- The Original Concept 154
- Inbuilt Problems 155
- Actual Developments 157

3.1.3 Broadcast Strategy and Planning 161
- Broadcast Targets 161
- Broadcast Languages 163
- Time Blocks 165
- Broadcast Content 165

3.2 PROGRAM PRODUCTION 166

3.2.1 Programming Conditions and Philosophies 167

3.2.2 Area Studio Program Production 170
- Studio Operations 171
- Production Capacity 175
- Types of Programs 175
- Program Standard and Quality 180

3.2.3 Station Program Production 181
- The International Shortwave Service 182
- The Domestic Medium Wave Service 185

3.2.4 RVOG News Service 188
- Operation Principles and Constraints 189
- Development of the Newsroom Operation 192

3.3 RVOG LISTENERS 196

3.3.1 Audience Relations 197
- The Shaping of a "Model" 198
- Administrative Problems 199
- New Efforts 200

3.3.2 Audience Research 201
- Realities and Obstacles 202
- Research at the Area Studio Level 203
- Research at the Station Level 204
- Findings and the Use of Them 205

3.3.3 Audience Participation 206
- Listener Mail 207
- Promotion 210
- Follow-Up 211
- Audience Participation 212

		PAGE
3.4	TRAINING AND CONSCIENTIZATION	213
3.4.1	Administrative Developments	214
	- Shaping of the Training Unit	214
3.4.2	Training Program	216
	- On-the-job Training	216
	- In-service Training	216
	- Resident Training	217
	- Scholarship Funds	217
3.4.3	Media Awareness-Building in the Church	218
3.5	RVOG AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF ITS ROLE	219
3.5.1	Early Role Conceptions Were Tested	220
3.5.2	Some Contemporary Assessments of Christian Radio Broadcasting	222
3.5.3	Towards a Refined Understanding of the Role and Function of RVOG	224

PART FOUR

THE CHANGING SCENE		229
4.1	REVOLUTION IN THE HOST COUNTRY	229
4.1.1	A Background to the Revolution	231
4.1.2	The Armed Forces Assume Power	232
	- The "Creeping Revolution"	233
	- The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) takes Power	236
4.1.3	Operation of RVOG in a Revolutionary Setting	240
	- RVOG's Integrity and Credibility	240
	- The Role and Function of RVOG in the New Situation	242
	- Planning for Emergency	244
4.1.4	The Military Take-Over of RVOG	246
4.2	ENFORCED REPLANNING	250
4.2.1	Winding Up of the RVOG Institutional Operations	250
4.2.2	Claim for Compensation	252
4.2.3	Planning for Continued Communication Ministries	255
	- The Search for New Radio Outlets	256
	- Consultative Services	258

		PAGE
4.3	THE RVOG EXPERIENCE IN RETROSPECT	260
4.3.1	Political Developments	261
	- External and Internal Political Problems	261
	- Socio-Political Dimensions of the RVOG Operation	266
4.3.2	Church and Mission Developments	269
	- The Church in Mission	270
	- The Controversy	272
	- The Church in the World	276
4.3.3	Developments in Media Technology and the Use of It	277
	- Expansion and Distribution of Media Technology	278
	- Search for Direction in the Use of Modern Media	281

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APPENDIX I : List of References

APPENDIX II : Summary of Important Events and Developments

APPENDIX III: Index of Persons

APPENDIX IV : Key of Abbreviations

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
1.	LWFBS/NECC Organizational Chart	45
2.	City Map of Addis Ababa	61
3.	Site Plan of RVOG Campus	62
4.	Ground Plan of RVOG Administration and Studio Building	63
5.	Ground Plan of New Wing	64
6.	Plan of Family Residence	65
7.	Antenna Coverage	68
8.	Map of Relative RVOG Site Locations	69
9.	Breakdown of Capital Investment and Contributions	71-72
10.	RVOG Area Studios - Basic Data	89
11.	RVOG Organizational Chart 1963	94
12.	RVOG Administrative Chart 1976	100
13.	Expatriate Staff by Profession	105
14.	All Staff by Geographical Area	105
15.	Office and Section Heads/Supervisors by Geographical Areas	106
16.	Station Leadership by Country and Period of Service	106
17.	SW Broadcasting by Language and Time per Day	109
18.	MW Broadcasting by Language and Time per Day	109
19.	SW News Service by Language and Bulletins per Day	110
20.	Technical Operations and Errors by Year	110
21.	Total Broadcast Hours by Year and Time Lost	111
22.	Average Signal Quality of RVOG Transmissions	112
23.	Sharing of Operation Costs by Year	117
24.	Annual Contributions 1968 - 1976	118
25.	Volume of Operating Costs by Year	119
26.	Annual Operating Cost Breakdown by Department and Year	120

		Page
27.	SW Operation, including Full Depreciation on Capital Investment	121
28.	MW Transmission Cost	121
29.	Production Costs of English Programs produced at RVOG	122
30.	Production Costs for French Programs	122
31.	Production Costs for the News Bulletins	122
32.	Production Studios by Geographical Areas	172
33.	Distribution of Production Studios between Cooperating Partners	172
34.	Sample of Figures of Area Studio Finances 1965	173
35.	Staff Composition 1965 at some of the Area Studios	174
36.	Development of Area Studio Leadership 1963-1975	174
37.	Summary of Program Analysis November 1965	177
38.	Breakdown of Studio and Station Programming	184
39.	Programming Shares of the Cooperating Partners	185
40.	Breakdown of Programming for MW Services	187
41.	Expansion of the Newsroom Operation by Daily Newscasts and Languages	193
42.	Breakdown of Daily Newscasts by Language and Number of Casts on SW and MW	194
43.	Volume of Listener Mail	208
44.	Examples of SW Broadcasting in 1978	279
45.	Number of Radio Receivers 1960-1976	280

PREFACE

For most of the former RVOG employees - and I am one of them - it is difficult to speak of those years in Addis Ababa with objectivity. In spite of the frustrations that some experienced, in spite of obvious shortcomings and failures, a spirit of nostalgia prevails among those veterans who were once associated with this unique venture.

Two weeks after the nationalization of RVOG, I had to report to the annual meeting of a deeply shocked LWF Committee on Communication. I tried already then to recall the major characteristics of the recently silenced station, to explain what made it unique. I suggested five main features. Some of them should be found in other Protestant radio stations of major importance, but I do not know of any which combined all five. During each of the 14 years of RVOG's experience, these features may not have been fully implemented, but at least they guided the station policies. Some of them have become commonplace nowadays, but they were certainly not in the early days.

The first and most apparent feature is technical. In the late 50s, it was not so difficult to predict that radio was going to become a privileged medium of communication in many developing countries. Radio fitted into the oral tradition of the populations concerned. It was able to answer their increasing curiosity and their eagerness to relate to others. By the immediacy of the transmission, distribution problems encountered by other media were overcome. The late 50s was also the time when the transistor had just become available, thus making the reception of radio messages possible everywhere. But to bet heavily and invest on shortwave broadcasting at a time when optimists predicted that other electronic media, such as medium-wave radio and even television, would quickly expand in the developing world, was indeed more risky. Those predictions did not materialize to the extent anticipated, and the RVOG founders were proven right. Shortwave should not be shortlived, but was to play a major role during many years, in vast areas

of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Investing in a powerful shortwave station - technologically well equipped and professionally well run - was a wise decision.

This instrument - and now for the second characteristic - was not to be a centralized operation, bombarding "targets" with programs produced elsewhere and creating a kind of "electronic church", but rather a means put at the disposal of the churches and their own ministry - to provide them with a public voice where they had none or to complement what they were able to broadcast locally. Under the responsibility of the churches themselves, even if their involvement was not always as strong as desired, area studios were established for production as well as follow-up and research.

If one compares the situation at the beginning and at the end of the RVOG experience, it is amazing to see how many people were trained and how many churches gained a new communication awareness and equipped themselves to meet the challenge offered by the very existence of the Addis Ababa radio station.

The third characteristic is of a theological nature and has to do with the program policy followed from the outset and expressed in RVOG's motto: "PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD". The world being Christ's, this voice was not only going to bear witness to an other-worldly message, but to the Gospel incarnated in daily situations and socio-political contexts.

Over the antennas of RVOG, the Gospel was not confined to Sundays, nor development to its purely physical aspects. The programs strived to go beyond those false alternatives at the time when the proclamation/development debate had not reached the stage it has today. RVOG's programming was designed to meet the needs of the whole person, as an individual and as a member of society. The very vocation of the station - unlike similar Christian operations which either limit themselves to pure preaching or lose their Christian reference in their contribution to development concerns - was precisely to combine the proclamation of the Good News and assistance in the struggle against ignorance and poverty, in order to be a partner to people in their development - reply to their thirst of knowledge -

help them to realize their personal dignity and bring them closer to one another. Even the RVOG news which was so appreciated for its reliability, did not exist to try to attract audiences to more "pious" programs, but as a Christian service in its own right.

A fourth characteristic has been RVOG's cultural approach. Programs were produced in the areas where they should be heard. They had to be relevant to those areas and rooted in local cultures and values. The audiences, therefore, felt close to the content of the programs and were able to identify with them. The feeder studios also played an important role in collecting, preserving and making known traditional cultural expressions - songs, dances, music and folk-tales.

Throughout the years, RVOG's language policy paid particular attention to major languages in the receiving areas - such as Arabic and Kiswahili - as well as to specific languages seldom heard on transnational radio - such as Malagasy and Fulfulde. In addition to these regional languages, English and French were also used for their international and ecumenical dimension.

This brings me to the fifth characteristic - RVOG's ecumenical nature. Although owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation, RVOG never followed a narrow confessional line. From the outset, other Protestant - and also Orthodox - churches were partners in the operation, especially through the World Association for Christian Communication and its predecessors. Some feeder studios worked under the responsibility of the local Lutheran church, whereas others were operated by Christian councils. At the station itself, the foreign staff represented several Protestant denominations, and the Ethiopian staff included Lutherans as well as Orthodox and Catholics. In programs directed to Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church received equal treatment. RVOG developed contacts with many groups, from Evangelicals to Roman Catholics, and was preparing to develop even more such working relationships. Public communication is by its very nature inclusive, and RVOG contributed toward a massive crossing of boundaries; not only linguistic, political and geographical, but confessional as well.

It is, I believe, the combination of these five elements - technical, missiological, theological, cultural and ecumenical - which gave RVOG its uniqueness. They were part of the vision of the founders, as well as concrete goals set before staff, helping to call reality closer to an ideal.

In retrospect, we may also identify weaknesses and shortcomings more clearly. Perhaps the famous 30/70 formula - according to which 30% of the programs had to be of direct evangelistic nature and 70% educational and informative - was too rigid and led to misunderstandings and a certain dichotomy instead of always promoting the intended holistic approach. Too often the work of the feeder studios was not integrated into the ministry of the local church as much as it could have been. Too long, the strong appeal of the RVOG station prevented churches and studios from finding local outlets or engaging in other media; and certainly during too many years research was neglected by the station.

In order to learn lessons for the future, and also to pay an important tribute to an exciting past, many believed, when the RVOG chapter was abruptly ended, that a detailed account of the experience should be made available. Such work should gather facts on all aspects of the station's history, policy and work, put them in context and in proper perspective, describing achievements and shortcomings. Churches and studios, Christian communicators and researchers, and those concerned with the church's role in mission and development would certainly greatly benefit from such a research.

The LWF Commission on Communication agreed and turned to "an Ethiopian of Swedish descent", Pastor Manfred LUNDGREN, who kindly accepted this complex assignment on a voluntary basis. As a long-time missionary and an expert on Ethiopia, as a missiologist concerned with development issues, as the last Station Director of RVOG, Manfred Lundgren was well placed to write this book.

The result of his labours is now in our hands - factual, systematic, competent, thought-provoking and - as could be expected from him - extremely honest. This is a work which RVOG's rich experience merited and which will

be of lasting value to all those who have been associated with the station and its related studios, or who want to learn from them. This is a work for which we want to express deep gratitude to its author and through him to all those who in one way or another helped Radio Voice of the Gospel in "Proclaiming Christ to His World".

Geneva in July 1983

Marc CHAMBRON

FOREWORD

Why I dropped by my office that Saturday afternoon I really don't know, but there was the telex, still hot in the machine. Perhaps the most dramatic telex I ever received in Nor-Church Aid's Oslo headquarters:

> "THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION RADIO STATION
> IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, WAS NATIONALIZED
> THIS MORNING, SATURDAY MARCH 12, BY THE
> ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT".

I read the telex several times. Then, after some reflection, I sat down by my desk and wrote:

"Thus ended the first chapter of Radio Voice of the Gospel ....."

A most readable chapter, indeed! With incredible challenges, with breath-taking episodes and unexpected events, and now this highly dramatic ending: with the rattling of guns and telexes speeding the bad news to the ends of the earth, catching Geneva and the Lutheran World Federation at the worst possible time, on a weekend with closed offices and most people away.

Interestingly enough, the closing of the station highlighted what we had known all along, namely that Radio Voice of the Gospel had been something entirely unique in the normally routine and fairly drab operation of an international church organization located in safe and neutral Switzerland.

RVOG was in the first place both unexpected and unwanted. Not that it was born out of wedlock, but more than one of the leading Lutheran churchmen was concerned at its conception, spoke openly against its birth and only reluctantly participated in its official baptism.

The child was not very old, however, before it had charmed its critics and inspired them to speak of the new venture with a warmth and commitment that surprised all and gladdened many.

RVOG soon became a coveted child. Wise men came from the East to admire the child, bringing precious gifts and even offers of adoption. There were those who claimed it was their child, having conceived the idea before the Lutherans, which all led to negotiations that even now, years later, make fascinating reading.

The child grew rapidly, and took on characteristics that few had anticipated. Within a year of its public debut official delegations from surrounding countries came to protest its voice interfering into national politics. The gentle Voice of the Gospel was hotly accused of aiding rebels, of instigating civil wars and of being a "Voice of the Devil". The station was caught in the eternal tension between Arabs and Jews. Worried Christians begged that RVOG news to the Middle East be stopped. Tense situations arose when the host country demanded propaganda information broadcast to a warring neighbour. The youngster stood its ground on the written word, signed by the two contract partners.

Radio Voice of the Gospel sounds somewhat romantic or even emotional. Yet RVOG was nothing of the sort. Its staggering steel masts impressed many a churchman, and its high jumps into the ionosphere had astounded many more. But the whole station was a down-to-earth enterprise. Big words and bold statements by potential heroes were banned before they ever got close to a microphone. RVOG copied the best the profession knew, and tailor made its approach to its African and Asian audiences. To build up such professional expertise was a slow and painful process, and cross-cultural communication is an art of the few. But there was no lack of dogged determination, there was much faithful labour and there was considerable success.

Most unexpectedly, the Voice of the Gospel became a voice of education for innumerable people that no school had ever touched. Thousands of people learned to understand the Bible, thousands of others learned about their own country and their culture and, above all, people heard the news; real

news, not political propaganda or slanted religious information: here were the events that had actually happened, presented to make the hearer understand that had really taken place.

To many people it came, of course, as a surprise that most of the news was bad news, but people learned to nod their heads: "This was RVOG news".

When I got the news of the station being nationalized my thoughts went up to God in gratitude for the fact that it was Manfred Lundgren who was at the helm when this drama took place. This was an hour for which Manfred had long been trained and prepared, a crisis in which his enviable reputation in Ethiopia, his language abilities and his personal qualifications all worked together for the best.

That was in 1977. Now, in the year 1983, Manfred Lundgren has with predictable painstaking care and systematic toil documented the entire RVOG venture from beginning to end. In my book he is absolutely "the best man possible" for this undertaking, eminently equipped for the job. A number of books and dissertations have been written on RVOG, but Lundgren's documentation is "The Book on RVOG".

My personal and warm congratulations to the Lutheran World Federation and to Manfred Lundgren on this achievement.

Norway in March 1983

Sigurd ASKE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Had it not been a commitment, and had I not received so much encouragement, guidance and assistance from experts and friends, this study would never have been completed. I am, therefore, indebted to a number of people who have in various ways taken part in this work.

Because of the nature of this undertaking it is, however, not possible to mention all those to whom acknowledgements are due. Yet a few ought to be mentioned.

I am especially indebted to the LWF Department of Communication, its Director, Marc CHAMBRON, and his staff, and to Miss Vera HENRICH of the LWF Finance Office, who have supplied me with source material, checked facts and figures, as well as guided and encouraged me throughout the work.

It is also with a deep sense of gratitude I mention Dr. Sigurd ASKE, Dr. Knud JØRGENSEN, Dr. and Mrs. Ezra GEBRE-MEDHIN and Dr. Menkir ESAYAS who have so willingly and helpfully served as resource persons.

The SWEDISH NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE LWF has also given invaluable assistance by making Mrs. Diane ÅHMAN available for proofreading and typing the manuscript and by providing other services in the course of the work, for which I am most grateful.

Professor Carl F. HALLENCREUTZ of the School of Mission at the Uppsala University has given most valuable guidance and assistance throughout the whole period of study and preparation of the manuscript for which I am deeply grateful.

All the above mentioned and many more who have shown their interest in this work and given their encouragement are included in this expression of sincere appreciation.

Hyllinge, Sweden, in August 1983

Manfred LUNDGREN

PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD

The Experience of Radio Voice of the Gospel 1957 — 1977

by

Manfred Lundgren

The establishment and operation of the International Christian radio station ETLF in Ethiopia, owned by the Lutheran World Federation and operated as an ecumenical venture.

RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL

An Experience in Christian World Mission

1957 - 1977

INTRODUCTION

The Story

The broadcasting venture, known as RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL - or just RVOG - was not only a radio station in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation; RVOG was a complex international operation across geographical and denominational boundaries. It included a network of program production studios spread over South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, some of which were Lutheran and others not. It was a team-work of missionaries and professional broadcasters of many nationalities, and was sponsored by churches and church-related agencies around the globe.

The broadcasting institution consisted of two stations, both located in the central highland of Ethiopia. The main station was in the southern outskirts of Addis Ababa on a beautiful hillside with groups of huge eucalyptus trees and clusters of African bush. On the campus were the administration and studio buildings and the mediumwave transmitter with its antenna tower. There was also a nice residential area with individual houses for 20 families and apartments for 10 single staff members. The transmitter station with all the antenna towers and the two shortwave transmitters were located 30 km south of the main station on an open field with no trees and with only a few grass huts in the distance.

The story of this broadcasting institution ended abruptly in the early hours of March 12th, 1977, when government troops moved in and took over the station. At the time when this happened RVOG had been in operation just over 14 years. It had beamed its message for more than 120.000 hours

in a number of languages and millions of listeners on the continents of Asia and Africa had daily tuned in to the programs. It had been of comfort to many and uncomfortable to others. It had been appreciated and criticized. Some called RVOG "a friend" and others considered it a potential enemy.

How was it that a modern transnational radio station happened to be located in the heart-land of the ancient Ethiopian empire? Why was it built in the first place? Why was Ethiopia chosen? How did it function? What did it achieve? What was significant about it? These and similar questions certainly come to an observer's mind when RVOG is mentioned.

Seen from a contemporary and global perspective, RVOG was just one among scores of other Christian radio stations in the world, established at a time when shortwave radio had captured the imagination of mission strategists. From this point of view there was nothing unique about RVOG. The objective of the station was to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ which had always been the obligation of the Christian church. Radio was a new and powerful means to achieve this objective, and Ethiopia was found to be a strategic and technically suitable location for a Christian radio station.

In these general terms, RVOG is easily classified as one of the many missionary radio stations in the world.However, as other Christian radio stations, RVOG had its specific characteristics. It had its own constituent features and its own broadcasting philosophy. It developed its own models in Christian broadcasting as well as in ecumenical cooperation. It made specific contributions and gained valuable experiences in the use of modern communication media as instruments in the mission of the Church - experiences of both shortcomings and achievements. Seen from this perspective, the RVOG story represents two decades of a unique Christian radio ministry.

It is this story which will be narrated on the following pages - the story of how this project was conceived, how it was implemented, what its characteristics were and how it functioned until the time when it was silenced by the country's military government and turned into RADIO VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA [1]

---

1) The new name given to the radio station by the Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia.

The Assignment

As owner and responsible operator of RVOG, the Lutheran World Federation was suddenly left with two major problems when its radio station was nationalized. One was to "close the files" of this broadcasting institution, and the other was to find appropriate forms and necessary means to continue the broadcasting ministry which had not been terminated. Both tasks should in the years to come prove to be more complicated and time-consuming than was anticipated to begin with.

To cope with these tasks, two arrangements were made. A team of professional staff from RVOG was first of all organized into the "Communication Unit for Africa" (CUFA) to provide consultative services to the churches and their production studios in the former service areas of the radio station but with special emphasis on Africa. Secondly, as the last Director of RVOG, I was transferred to the LWF Headquarters in Geneva to follow up on pending administrative matters and plan for a continuation of the broadcasting ministry.

The job description for my new position included, among other duties, "to compile and organize an historic documentation on RVOG and make or arrange for an evaluation of the RVOG ministry" (LWF/COC, June 1977, Exhibit 3). Due to extensive travel and a heavy work load this assignment could not be accomplished as regular office work. The question was therefore raised of whether it should be dropped or be pursued in a different way.

At its Annual Meeting in April 1979, the LWF Committee on Communication (LWF/COC), after a brief discussion, resolved:

" 1. that this assignment be re-activated as originally conceived;
2. that the assignment be given to a competent person outside the Office of Communication on agreed upon terms." (LWF/COC 1979)

In a special session on personnel matters it was further decided to ask me to take on the assignment after retirement from active service, which I accepted. This task has also proved to be more difficult and time-consuming than anticipated.

The Purpose

It is certainly appropriate to ask why LWF/COC considered it important to compile a documentation on the RVOG experience. Several researchers have in past years dealt with this subject and much has already been published. The LWF archives in Geneva have also - even if not complete - an ample documentation on RVOG in the form of reports, agendas, minutes and correspondence. However, there seem to be at least four valid reasons for this undertaking:

1. The local archives of RVOG were confiscated at the time when the radio station was nationalized and it is not known if or when these documents may be released. It is therefore important to make an inventory of available material, organize it and make it more easily accessible.
2. Due to the tense political situation in Ethiopia during the revolution, which started in early 1974, the reporting from RVOG has had to be very selective and carefully worded during the last three years. It is therefore important to fill in what may be missing and explain what was reported in a sketchy way.
3. Those researchers who have dealt with RVOG so far have either covered certain periods or certain aspects of the RVOG history. Other writers have mostly featured RVOG at a particular stage in its development and lifted up current issues at that particular time. There is so far no comprehensive record of the entire RVOG history.
4. International religious broadcasting is a controversial subject and RVOG neither is nor should be exempted from critical assessments. In the same way as the Church at large is expected to "communicate itself in a transparent way ... and provide full access to all information on all aspects of its structure and function" 2), so should RVOG also provide full access to information about itself.

The purpose is not to make the critical analysis which has been called for but to provide the information needed for an objective evaluation of this project.

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2) Report of the LWF Task Force on Mass Communication 1972:2.

The Approach

The original assignment did not provide any directives as to the scope and format of the "historic documentation". I have, however, understood it to mean a brief background history of the project with special emphasis on the circumstances which led to the establishment of the radio station, description of its structure, scope and function, as well as information about its administration and operation.

The complexity of the subject has led me to deal with the broadcasting institution and the radio ministry in two separate sections. Even if these two aspects overlap in many respects and are closely related, it seems practical and useful to deal with them separately.

In PART ONE, the cooperating partners are introduced and an outline is given of the contemporary situation which constituted the general setting for the project. This provides a background to PART TWO and PART THREE, which deal with the main subject. In PART FOUR, the changing situation in the host country and the service areas is briefly reviewed with special attention to events which led up to the nationalization of the station in March 1977.

The structure of the presentation is topical, but each topic is dealt with in a chronological sequence.

The Sources and Allied Research

In line with the intention and purpose of this study, official records of the RVOG project as well as related reports and correspondence have been considered to be the primary sources. It is from these documents that the basic data, facts and figures are gleaned. These sources were supplemented by personal interviews with individuals who, at different times and in different capacities, played a role in the project, as well as by personal observations and experiences during six years of service at the radio station.

Available literature, research documents and articles on Christian media communication in general and the RVOG project in particular have also been consulted in the course of pursuing this assignment.

With regard to the present status of research in the field of Christian media communication, it is noted that only in recent years has this subject received serious attention within the disciplines of theology and world mission. Some of the studies in this field were conducted within other disciplines like international relations, journalism and education. Even if important research projects have been carried our in recent years, the rapid developments in media technology in out time make it essential that Christian media communication be made a subject for intensified research with a special view towards the future.

Presently available research documents, theses and dissertations which are of particular interest in our context, can be grouped into three categories:

- Research on Radio Voice of the Gospel
- Comparative studies in which RVOG is included
- Studies on Christian media communication in general

To my knowledge, there are so far four researchers who have made systematic studies on the RVOG project.

Robert E. Van Deusen's dissertation is not only the first of its kind, but also by far the most explicit and extensive. Under the theme: A STUDY OF A CHURCH-RELATED INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING PROJECT IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, he gives a detailed background description of the radio project and an analysis of its operation during the first four years. His study was presented at the School of International Service of the American University in Washington DC and is dated February 1968.

In the early 1970's, a former Director of the RVOG area studio at Moshi, Tanzania (1962-1965), Ferdinand E. Baglo, made a study of the RVOG broadcasting ministry during its first decade. His thesis - RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL, A DECADE OF PERFORMANCE IN THE LIGHT OF STATED GOALS AND POLICIES - was presented in May 1972 at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago for a Master's Degree in Sacred Theology. The same year, Samuel Dominique presented a thesis for a Lic.Theol. at "Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille" in France. Under the title STATION BICONTINENTAL he gives an historical/analytical review of the RVOG history and operation

In June 1977, Lee Gordon Ruud presented his study THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL AS A FORM OF CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION at the School of Theology at Claremont, USA, for a doctoral degree. In his study he examines the nature of radio as a communication medium and how the theological stance of RVOG affected its radio ministry as a form of Christian mission.

Two major comparative studies on Protestant radio ministries, in which RVOG was included, were conducted in the second part of the 1970's. One of them was James M. Kushner's doctoral dissertation on INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING IN AFRICA. This study was presented at the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota in August 1976. In his study, he investigates program policies and problem areas of the main Christian radio stations in Africa and makes a comparative and critical assessment of their ministries.

In 1979 Allan Franzén had carried out a similar study on five international Christian radio stations including RVOG. His dissertation - EVANGELIUM I ETERN - was submitted for a Teol.Lic. degree at the University of Helsinki, Finland. In his study he first gives an extensive review of developments in Christian radio broadcasting from a missiological and theological perspective and then he makes an historical/analytical presentation of the radio ministries of the broadcasting stations under study.

In addition to these two dissertation, the BBC Producer and former RVOG staff member, Reginald Kennedy, has made a survey of Christian radio broadcasting under the title THE RADIO MISSIONARIES, which was published in the World Radio TV Handbook 1979. This article is a summary of an extensive study made by him which is still to be published. The tentative title of this manuscript is: THE WORD SENDERS - A personal assessment of the work of the major Protestant evangelical missionary radio stations -. RVOG is also included in his critical but positive assessment.

Among the recent studies on Christian media communication in general, the following are of particular interest in this context:

The German scholar, Joachim Schmidt, presented a doctoral dissertation in 1974 at the Heidelberg University on radio broadcasting in the mission of the Church. Under the title MASSENMEDIEN ALS INSTRUMENTE IN DER MISSION - MISSIONSRUNDFUNK ALS BEISPIEL he first gives a comprehensive outline of how Protestant missionary radio work has developed. He then critically analyses these radio ministries from a theological perspective and gives special attention to their denominational fragmentation and its implications. Schmidt's dissertation was published by Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission, Erlangen in 1980.

Two other doctoral dissertations were produced in 1981 dealing with aspects of Christian media communication.

At the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth in Fuller Theological Seminary, USA, Knud Joergensen, a Danish broadcaster and former Program Director of RVOG, presented his comprehensive study on THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF MEDIA IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH. Here he examines the professional aspects of media communication from a theological perspective and also discusses the practical application of his theses in the mission of the Church.

The same year, Menkir Esayas, an Ethiopian broadcaster and former Department Director at RVOG, presented his study THE LOCAL CONTEXT AS A SOURCE OF EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS ON MASS COMMUNICATION, DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND RELIGION IN AFRICA, at the Michigan State University. On the basis of an analysis of program production at two former RVOG area studios, he critically examines media communication, development and education with special reference to the local context. In a final section, he discusses the Church in communication. In this category also belongs the study PERSPECTIVES FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATION by Cees Hamelink. This study is of interest in this context because it was carried out under the auspices of the LWF Commission on Studies at the time when RVOG was in operation. From a socio-political perspective, Hamelink is critically examining the involvement of the Church in public media. Even if it is obvious that the presentation is based on a misconception with regard to the intention behind the Church's involvement in public media, the study is a contribution just because of its cricital approach and views.

In addition to the above-mentioned documents and publications, a variety of literature has been used as background reading in the course of this study. References to such literature will be made in the text and a bibliography will be appended.

PART ONE

THE BEGINNING

THE BEGINNING

Any project or program, regardless of its nature and scope, is a "child of its time" and belongs in a given historic and social setting. It is always conditioned by contemporary trends and events. The final and decisive factors when a project is undertaken are, however, the felt needs and available resources. Radio Voice of the Gospel was no exception to this rule. We shall therefore, before going into the project history itself, briefly recall and review some of the most important circumstances which led to the undertaking of this project and some of the events which moulded it into what it was.

1.1. The Three Partners

Dr. Robert Van Deusen has, in his book on RVOG, said that there were two main streams of thought and action, each independent of the other, which led to the establishment of RVOG (Van Deusen 1968:38). He is here referring to the Lutheran World Federation and the Near East Christian Council. It is true that these organizations were the ones responsible for the planning. They took the important decisions and raised the necessary funds. They were "Party A and B" in this venture. We shall, however, not forget that there was also a third party which played an important role, namely the local churches and their programming studios. We shall here briefly introduce these three partners, who assumed and played their respective roles and who made the project a reality. The presentation will, however, be limited to developments which led to their participation in the project.

1.1.1. The Lutheran World Federation 1)

When the idea of an LWF radio ministry was first presented, the Federation had existed ten years in its present form. During that decade world mission had been one of its main concerns. The emergency situation in world mission at the end of the Second World War was in fact a contributing factor when LWF was formed 1947. Many of the

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1) The Lutheran World Federation is a free association of Lutheran churches with a present membership (1983) of 54 million. The organization dates back to 1947 and its Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.

European churches and mission agencies had been cut off from the areas of their traditional mission work in Asia and Africa. In this situation the International Missionary Council (IMC) encouraged Protestant churches in the West, which were not to the same degree affected by the war restrictions, to take on responsibility for what they called "orphaned missions". IMC also took initiative to organize and coordinate assistance to those mission areas already before the war was over. In these efforts the IMC turned to the Lutheran World Convention, which had existed since 1923, for assistance to the Lutheran "orphaned missions" in Africa and Asia. The response to this request was positive and the new ministry to those mission areas was, to begin with, carried out by the Church of Sweden in cooperation with the National Lutheran Council of the United States. (Schiotz 1980:70).

It was soon realized that if the Lutheran churches in the world were to be able to cope with their post-war responsibilities, the Lutheran World Convention would have to be reorganized. A preparatory meeting with this aim was held in Uppsala, Sweden in 1946 and the following year the LWF constitutional assembly was convened at Lund.

From the beginning the new organization was challenged with two major tasks. One was "to launch a ministry of rehabilitation and healing for homeless brethren in Europe and help the war-battered churches". The other was "to assist the foreign mission societies and their emerging churches". (Schiotz op.cit.). The post-war situation was, however, not only marked by suffering and devastation. There were also constructive trends both on the political level and in world mission. The emergence of national leadership was one of them. Many of the new political leaders were also related to the rapidly growing churches.

In the early 1950's, LWF realized that something ought to be done to help the churches to play their role in the impending political changes, particularly in Africa. An initiative was therefore taken to bring church leaders together for a consultation. This resulted in the First All Africa Lutheran Conference, which was held at Marangu, Tanganyika, in November 1955. This conference marked a new era in Lutheran church-mission relationship.

It was at the beginning of this process of changing church-mission relationships that RVOG was conceived and designed to be an instrument at the disposal of the indigenous churches, as we shall see in the following chapters. The idea of using radio in the ministry of the Church was also mentioned at the Marangu Conference. (The Marangu Report LWF/DWM 1956:112).

Two years later, the Director of the Department of World Mission, Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, proposed to his Commission that LWF should consider launching a radio ministry for Asia and Africa. Within the following year (1958) the principle decisions were taken and the proposal to establish an LWF radio station somewhere in Africa was approved. (LWF/CWM 1959 a:9-10).

What LWF did not know at the time when these decisions were taken, was that the Near East Christian Council had developed similar plans and that within a few months the two organizations would discover that they were planning to do the same thing in the same country at the same time. When this was discovered, the two organizations came together and drew up an agreement for cooperation which made it possible for them to stay together and achieve their objectives. They agreed to work together in a "Party A and B" relation, which meant that "Party A" should be the owner and operator of the radio station and "Party B" a privileged partner in broadcasting. At the time when this agreement was signed it was not known which of the two organizations should be what. It was only five months later that LWF was awarded the permission by the Ethiopian Government, by which LWF assumed the role as "Party A".

1.1.2. The Near East Christian Council (NECC) and Its Successors [1)]

If we can say that concern for world mission was a contributing factor in the formation of LWF in 1946/47 and that the IMC to some extent and indirectly contributed to the reorganization process, we can certainly say that the NECC grew out of concern for world mission and that it was inspired by the IMC.

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1) This organization as a regional council of churches and missions dates back to 1927. It was renamed Near East Council of Churches. In 1974 it was again reconstituted and called Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Its present membership (1981) is about five million and its Headquarters is in Beirut, Lebanon.

At a meeting in Helwan, Egypt, in 1927, the "Christian Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa" was organized. Three years later the organization was renamed "Near East Christian Council". This organization was, as Van Deusen puts it, "a link in the chain of national missionary councils, which stemmed from the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910". (Van Deusen 1968:38-39).

Among the stated objectives of the NECC, one was "to establish a working relationship between the ancient churches of the Near East and the indigenous churches supported by mission societies in Europe and America". (Van Deusen 1968:39). Among the main supporting agencies were the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in USA and the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.

As in most activities of foreign missions upto the middle of the century, NECC was dominated by its overseas supporters and involvement of the local churches was weak. The political unrest in the area during the first part of the 1950's brought about a change in the working relationships within the constituency of NECC. Van Deusen describes this change in the following way: "The Churches felt an urgency to show that they were indigenous rather than off-shoots of foreign churches and missions". (Van Deusen 1968:39). The war situation created at the same time a need for relief programs. This brought about a broader ecumenical cooperation and fellowship which also included the ancient churches. At the same time as there was a growing self-awareness among the national churches in the Near East, there was also a broadening ecumenical fellowship. This development was important for the future radio work.

In the meantime, the idea of a radio station for NECC had repeatedly been discussed. It was at a conference on audio-visual aids, held in Cairo 1948, that the first recommendation was made to NECC regarding exploration of possibilities to establish an independent radio station. The proposal was strongly supported by the NECC overseas partners and a positive action was taken at the triennial meeting of NECC the following year. A special committee to study this matter was appointed and it was expected that this committee should present a concrete proposal at the NECC Executive Committee 1950

The explorations were, however, not successful and the radio committee was not in the position to present a proposal as anticipated. Hoping for an early solution, the Executive Committee authorized at that meeting the establishment of a program production studio in Beirut.

The search for a suitable place to build a radio station continued in the following years with the support of the Division of Foreign Missions of the NCC and of RAVEMCCO (Radio, Audio-Visual and Mass Communication Committee of the NCC). Lebanon, Ethiopia, Cyprus, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and Tangier were among the many options which had been considered, but for one reason or another all of them had been abandoned.

At the triennial meeting of NECC in April 1952, the Radio Committee expressed reluctance to pursue the idea of an independent radio station further and suggested that the possibilities to use local radio stations should be explored.

With the financial help of RAVEMCCO and the Division of Foreign Missions of the NCC, the Near East Christian Council now decided to improve the equipment of the Beirut studio and increase staff in order to make it a radio training centre. In 1953 the Reverend Harold A. Fisher was seconded to the NECC to head the training centre. He was later to become the Program Coordinator and Liaison Officer at the LWF broadcasting station in Addis Ababa.

The NECC efforts to find a local radio outlet were not successful in the following years, and when it was reported to the Executive Committee in 1956 that the Lebanon authorities had turned down the NECC request for airtime, it was decided to urgently investigate the possibilities to obtain a franchise on Cyprus or in Ethiopia or Tangier. The matter was now considered so urgent that the Executive Secretary, Dr. Harry Dorman, was authorized to call an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee as soon as an action had to be taken.

NECC was now determined to establish a radio station of its own. At its triennial meeting in early 1958, the constitution was amended. The ad-hoc Radio Committee was now made a permanent unit in the NECC organizational structure and its name was changed to "NECC Radio and

Audio-Visual Committee" (NECCRAVCO). The meeting also voted to send a "commission of inquiry" to Ethiopia/Eritrea, Sudan, Jordan and Iraq. (Van Deusen 1968:50).

It was when both NECC and LWF in the same year turned to Ethiopia for a possible location of a radio station that they learned about each others intentions. Surprisingly enough, both organizations seemed to have been ignorant of these up to that point. When LWF was awarded the franchise a year later, NECC became "Party B", which meant a privileged partnership in broadcasting. In 1963 NECC was integrated into a larger group of regional councils, including All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and East Asia Christian Conference (EACC). The new organization, called "Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting (CCIB)", at that time took over the functions of "Party B" in the radio project.

Two years later "Party B" was restructured again and made a global agency called "Coordinating Committee for Christian Communication (CCCB)". In 1968, the CCCB merged with the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), which from that time became "Party B" in the radio project and remained so as long as RVOG was in operation.

1.1.3. The Local Churches and Their Program Studios

The idea of establishing a radio ministry both within NECC and LWF was born at the time when traditional church-mission relationships were at stake. Former "mission-churches" attained national independence under their own leadership. They became entities of their own. This was also reflected in the planning of RVOG. There was, in fact, also a "third party" in the radio project from the beginning, namely the local churches and their program production studios. It is true that the role of the local churches was rather insignificant in the planning of the radio station, which may be an explanation of the fact that they did not appear as a partner in the project structure. This is regrettable for many reasons, but it should not mislead us to think that the local churches were ignored. RVOG was from the beginning designed in such a way that it should not only serve the churches but be a technical facility at their disposal. They should be responsible for the most important part of the operation, namely the message.

Dr. Birkeli said already in his report to the 1957 General Assembly of LWF, when he presented the idea of an LWF radio ministry: "We believe in African and Asian churches as the best instrument in continuing the evangelization among the millions in these continents". (LWF Assembly Proceedings 1957:106). The founder and first Director of RVOG, Dr. Sigurd Aske, expressed this intention even more strongly when he later said: "The station does not evangelize; the churches do". (Aske: IRM July 1967:355).

Dr. Menkir Esayas is, in his evaluation of RVOG in the local context, regretting that more attention was not given to the African churches and their concerns at the crucial stage when the radio project was planned and approved, but he also points out that it is difficult to say that the churches were not involved, and he observes: "One cannot disqualify the direct expression of interest in radio shown at Marangu nor the indirect involvement of churches in Africa". (Esayas 1981:67).

The local churches and their production studios were expected to assume responsibilities in two major fields. One was the program production and the other was audience relations and the follow-up work.

The area studios were independent operations responsible to their own constituencies. All capital investment for building and equipment as well as the annual operating costs should be carried by the local churches and their overseas mission supporters. Only in certain cases were loans given towards initial capital expenses. At the same time, the studios were responsible to the station with regard to content and quality of their program production. We shall come back to this question of the dual responsibility which the studios had and how they functioned in relation to their churches and to RVOG.

The local churches and their studios, which were spread over South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, can be divided into four different categories:

1. LWF related churches and studios
2. "Party B" related studios
3. Lutheran Hour (Missouri Synod) related studios
4. Studios with a special relationship to RVOG

The first category had to start from scratch. The studios were built and staff was recruited and trained at the same time as the station was established. NECC had had a program studio in Beirut since 1951, which had been upgraded to a training centre. Other NECC studios were built later. The Lutheran Hour studios were already well established when the station was planned. They had a considerable experience and production capacity at that time. Other non-Lutheran studios which had a direct relation to RVOG like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, started at the same time as the station was established.

Through program exchange, consultative services and regular consultations and conferences, the area studios grew together and fulfilled their role in spite of weak church backing and involvement, financial difficulties, understaffing and periods of unsatisfactory assistance also from the station.

In the following chapters we shall in more detail deal both with the individual studios and their program production. We shall also take up the question of church involvement and how the local churches related to the radio station.

1.2. The Historical Framework

The "RVOG Story" belongs in a period of world history when many different trends and phenomena converged and collided on the world scene. Most important for the LWF radio project and its development were the political, the missiological and the technological trends which surfaced in the decades following the Second World War and shaped the setting for this project.

The political trends had partly been building up over a long period of time. Others emerged in the wake of the war. The political scene was dominated by struggle for political freedom, for liberation from economic exploitation, for human rights and social justice. The missiological trends, which radically reshaped traditional concepts and church-mission relationships at this time, were not new, but developed much faster than expected and collided with the established understanding of mission. The most remarkable developments at this time were, however, the technological advancements in the fields of

transportation and mass communication which reduced the world to a "global village" and realization of the hope to make life in this "village" more human and meaningful seemed to be within reach. All these trends and the immediate effects of them contributed to an optimistic expectation that there was a better future ahead of mankind. There was a general pre-occupation with the future, a determination to shape it into something better and a confidence in the ability of mankind to do it. What Dr. Walter Capps calls the "hope movement" or the "school of hope", which originated in Germany at this time, inspired by the German Philosopher, Ernst Bloch, is perhaps the most significant expression of this futuristic orientation and of the confidence that developments were controllable. "It is only the future that is amenable to our plans and actions ... we can achieve the world we want by working together to get it", is one of the statements which illustrates the views of this movement. (Capp 1970:5).

Alvin Toffler, in his recent book "The Third Wave", describes this period as the time when "the industrial era (The Second Wave civilization) peaked and the Third Wave began to surge". About the actual period he writes: "The Second Wave brought with it a fantastic extension of human hope. For the first time men and women dared to believe that poverty, hunger and tyranny might be overthrown". (Toffler 1981:50). The Ecumenical Movement was also marked by the same optimism at this time in history. (Nash 1975:30-83).

The two first decades after the Second World War, when RVOG was planned and implemented, were marked by this global optimism. The decolonization process and large scale development efforts were under way and appropriate world organizations were set up to initiate, coordinate and supervise these efforts. It was believed that a constructive process of global dimensions had started and that it should be successful. These positive trends should, however, soon collide with unexpected phenomena and problems. Political independence turned into new forms of oppression and power struggle. The massive development efforts did not bring about expected results in bridging the gap between rich and poor and the industrial explosion began to have alarming effects on the environment.

It was in this period that the "RVOG Story" began and it is against this general background we shall follow its development, but before going into the actual history of the project itself, we shall briefly take a look at the three most important conditions in which it was to be implemented and to which it had to adjust.

1.2.1. The Political Scene

After the fall of Berlin in May 1945 and the Hiroshima nuclear blast in August the same year, the Second World War had come to an end. The world seemed now to be set for a constructive period of peaceful co-existence, cooperation and development. The world was, however, not at peace. An ideological and political power struggle - a "cold war" - began, which was going to keep the world divided into "East and West". This was also going to mark developments in the areas where RVOG was to carry out its ministry. The three general service areas of RVOG - Asia, Middle East and Africa - were all in the midst of this ideological and political power struggle.

Asia went through radical changes at this time. India became independent within the British Commonwealth in 1947. Mao Tse-tung came to power in 1948 and remodelled the traditional Chinese society. Indonesia attained independence and became a republic in 1949 and Japan regained its independence 1951. At the time when the Bandung Conference was held in 1955, Asia had got a new political "face".

The political event which was going to be a turning point in the Middle East at this time, was the establishment of Israel as an independent state in 1948. This had been the ultimate aim of the Zionist Movement since the Basel Congress in 1897 when this organization was formed. The proclamation of Israel as the home-land of the Jewish people was, however, totally unacceptable to the Arab world and resulted in immediate military actions by the neighbouring countries. From this time the Middle East has been in a permanent state of tension and war. Due to the fact that the problems in the area to a large extent had to do with religious and cultural traditions and convictions, the Christian churches in the area had an important but delicate role to play, which their participation in the RVOG operation was to show.

In Africa the period 1950-1960 was marked by the struggle for freedom from the colonial powers. Also here the struggle can be traced back to the beginning of the century, when the First Pan-African Conference was held in London in 1900. At that meeting as well as at the following meetings, demands for civil and political rights for Africans were put forth, but it was only at the Manchester meeting in 1945 that the demand for independence and self-rule for Black Africa was clearly pronounced for the first time. In 1958 the Pan-African Movement held its first meeting on African soil. Ghana, which had attained independence the year before, was the host country for that historic meeting. (Legum 1963:43).

At the time for the Ghana meeting, six African countries, previously under colonial rule, had become independent states. Within two years after that meeting, more than twenty countries had attained independence. (Davidson 1978:394).

It was also at this time that the "First Development Decade" was declared by the United Nations. To begin with, this decade was marked by an optimistic expectation that material aid and modern technology should resolve the prevailing economic and social problems in the so-called developing countries.

The Christian churches were also actively involved in these development efforts, and in order to enable the churches to make a meaningful contribution, church-related development agencies were set up in the industrialized part of the world. Among them was also the Lutheran World Federation Community Development Service (LWF/CDS), which started in 1962.

The struggle for independence, social justice and development in the service areas of RVOG was going to be one of the greatest challenges as the radio ministry developed. At the same time, it was this very struggle and its socio-political implications which were going to create unforeseen and difficult problems for the radio station.

1.2.2. Missiological Trends

At the same time as the political scene of the areas where RVOG was going to carry out its ministry was radically reshaped, world mission itself – where RVOG belonged – was going through one of the most crucial periods in its history. Traditional forms of foreign mission as well as its established structures and policies were seriously questioned and to a large extent drastically changed in the first decades after the Second World War.

It was when he considered these developments that the well known German Missiologist, Dr. Walter Freytag, made the provocative statement: "Mission is no longer mission". (SMT 1954/3). Other scholars talked about "The Decisive Decade" for the Christian Church and her mission (Chirgwin 1948) and "Missions at the Crossroads" (Soltau 1954). The abundance of literature dealing with the "crisis" in world mission and the many conferences and consultations arranged to discuss this subject indicate how deep-going the conceptual and actual reshaping of world mission was at that time.

The parallelism in developments on the political scene and that of world mission is also worth noting. Both stemmed from outdated Western concepts and practices and indicate how close the interrelation is between the secular and religious spheres. Christian mission can never be carried out in isolation from political and social realities, nor can it be politically neutral. This fact is well documented throughout its history. These observations have a particular bearing on the RVOG broadcasting ministry. Its public nature in addition to the fact that it belonged in world mission made the ongoing developments of decisive importance for the setting of its policies and priorities. It would, however, be outside the scope of this study to review in more detail the important questions under debate and the changes which took place in world mission at this time.

Two developments seem, however, to need special attention – developments which, together with the political situation, made up the general setting for the radio project. One was the ecumenical movement and its impact. The other was the emerging churches in the traditional mission areas and the resulting changes in church-mission relationships. These two developments had a direct bearing on the planning of the radio project as well as on its ministry over the years.

From the middle of the century, we can say that a new chapter began in the long history of the Ecumenical Movement. It was at this time that it developed new organizational and administrative structures. It is certainly not just an historic accident that this happened at the time when the hope for a better future, which we have mentioned earlier, began to inspire groups and individuals to plan and work towards achievement of this goal. Margaret Nash also takes up this aspect in her history of the Ecumenical Movement in the 1960's. In a section on "Man the architect of his own ecumenical future", she reviews this development (Nash 1975:4-83).

The World Council of Churches (WCC), which embodied the main stream of the Ecumenical Movement, was constituted at the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, but its pre-history goes back to the early decades of the century and is deeply rooted in the missionary movement.

Almost invariably the Edinburgh world mission conference in 1910 is referred to as the origin of WCC. In the preface to the above-mentioned book by Margaret Nash, Dr. W.A. Visser't Hooft - the first General Secretary of WCC - talks about a "remarkable continuity" in its development from about 1920. It was in that decade that the results from the Edinburgh conference began to take form. The International Missionary Council (IMC) was formed in 1921 and regional Christian councils, which also resulted from the same meeting, were organized in many parts of the world during that decade. The Stockholm conference on Life and Work was held in 1925 and the Lausanne world meeting on Faith and Order was convened in 1927. All these initiatives and developments had their roots in the Edinburgh meeting and were all later absorbed in the WCC organizational structure. The important world mission conferences organized by the IMC in the following decades had also prepared the ground for the formation of WCC in 1948.

In the 1950's WCC rapidly expanded into the global organization it was meant to be. Its main objective was to promote and foster fellowship between churches and, in pursuing that aim, it continued to be deeply involved in world mission as developments in the following decades also show.

In the 1960's church-world relations came more in focus than inter-church relations. (Nash 1975:261). This was also reflected in the missiological debate prior to the Uppsala Assembly in 1968.

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that the Ecumenical Movement was entirely absorbed in WCC or that the two are identical. It has rightly been pointed out that WCC is an institution and that the Movement belongs to another order of realities. "As a fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit, it leads all associated with it - churches and faithful - towards the fulfilment which infinitely transcends any institutional action; the visible restoration of unity in the Body of Christ." (Willebrands, cited by Nash 1975:8).

In line with this understanding, it is appropriate to say that there were other streams which took different directions and resulted in other forms of ecumenical relations.

One of them, which played an important role in world mission and not least in the use of modern media as a tool in evangelistic outreach at this time, was the World Evangelical Fellowship and its affiliates (WEF). This organization was formed in 1952 and developed parallel to the WCC into a broad global structure. It is usually referred to as "Conservative Evangelicals" and sometimes also considered to be "anti-ecumenical". The first is an inadequate definition and the second is not quite correct. The historical background of WEF and its multi-confessional constituency make it an ecumenical organization even if its structures and objectives are different from those of WCC.

The WEF originates from the Evangelical Alliance, which had existed since 1846 and consisted of individuals and groups with a common concern for personal experience of the faith in Jesus Christ and for proclamation of the Gospel. WEF took over the same basic characteristics and, in contrast to WCC, it does not consider inter-church relations of major importance, nor does it share the WCC's views on church-world relations, which became an issue in the 1960's.

Related to the WEF are a number of interconfessional mission agencies, of which many operate as "faith missions" without formal church structures. There are also several independent Christian broadcasting agencies which belong in this group and which we shall come back to in a later context.

The above aspects of the Ecumenical Movement have been lifted up here because they belong in the general setting of the LWF radio project and are not intended to be a representative presentation of the Ecumenical Movement, its role and impact at this time.

The other major development in world mission of interest in our context, is the emerging churches and their leadership in the areas where foreign mission was established. Related to this is the gradual shift from traditional "mission fields" to "mission on six continents".

The old understanding of mission as a geographical extension of the established Church - identical with Christendom in the West and its civilization - had begun to fade away during the first half of the century. The secularization process in the western world and the emerging churches in the mission areas had over some decades made this concept invalid. We can follow the evolvement of a new understanding of the Church and her mission through the previously mentioned world mission conferences organized by the IMC.

The secularization in the "Christian West", which was mentioned as a matter of concern already at Edinburgh in 1910, had become a serious problem at the next world conference, which was held in Jerusalem in 1928. This issue was at that time a major item on the agenda and seems to have dominated the whole conference. At the same time the so-called "younger churches" were well represented at this meeting and made a significant contribution. Their presence at this meeting and the discussion about the increasing secularization marked the beginning of a shift in the traditional understanding of mission in terms of a "Christian West" and a non-Christian rest of the world. This shift was even more clearly reflected in the preparation for the next meeting organized by IMC in 1938 - this time at Tambaram in India.

Dr. Hendrik Kramer had for this meeting prepared his famous book "The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World", which made a tremendous impact on the conference as well as on churches and mission agencies around the world. One of his main theses was that the world situation had radically changed and the church found herself in a deep crisis. He pointed out that "Corpus Christianum", which up to this time had been regarded as a basic reality in world mission, no longer existed and that it was time for the Church to realize this fact. The Church was now to assume her missionary function in each locality. (Kraemer 1940). These new thoughts were further refined and deepened at the following two world conferences, which focused more on the nature of the Church in her missionary function. The devise "Partnership in obedience", which was the motto for the meeting at Whitby, Canada in 1947, was taken further at the next world conference, which was held at Willingen in Germany in 1952, to an understanding of the Church in mission as an organic unity in the Body of Christ.

The time was now ripe for a radical review of the working relations between the emerging churches and their overseas partners - a review which resulted in a process of church-mission integration in the 1950's and the following decade. When the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, at its meeting in Mexico City 1963, adopted the motto "Mission on six continents", it was just a confirmation of the conceptual shift which already had taken place.

The planning of RVOC and its implementation coincided with these developments and it was in the situation which resulted from these, that the radio ministry of RVOC had to find its place and play its role. It is also in this general context that the controversial missiological trends and issues related to the nature and structure of mission, which were so heatedly discussed at that time, had to be dealt with by the radio station.

Related to the above-mentioned trends and developments was also the search for a theological understanding of communication of the Gospel and the use of modern media in the ministry and mission of the Church. Two important documents on this subject were produced in the 1960's. One was the Papal decree on the media in social communication, adopted by the Second Vatican Council in 1963. The other was the WCC document of "The Church and the Media of Mass Communication", adopted at the Uppsala Assembly in 1968.

These documents gave, however, no final answers to the many new questions about effective and credible Christian communication. As new discoveries were made through experience and research about media use, its limitations and possibilities, the search continued and was intensified. The entire period of the RVOG operation was marked by this search, but it was at the same time a rewarding and an exciting experience, as we shall see in the following.

1.2.3. Technological developments

The time when the LWF radio project was conceived and implemented was also the period when modern technology made its most remarkable breakthrough. This was also pointed out by the LWF President, Bishop Hanns Lilje, at the 1957 General Assembly, when the idea of the radio project was first presented. In his keynote address he said: "Modern technology has altered our present world more profoundly and more effectively than has ever been done before in any previous era of human history.". (LWF Assembly Proceedings 1957:30).

Radio broadcasting was not new at that time, but it was only then it could offer large scale services. The explanation to this is the development of shortwave broadcasting and the innovation of transistor receivers at the middle of the century. (Franzén 1979:39-40).

The tremendous expansion of radio broadcasting at this time is most clearly seen in the increase of both transmitters and receivers in the world. Africa and Asia also got a small share. The statistics show that there was an increase of more than 100% during these ten years in both Asia and Africa. (Van Deusen 1968:20-21). In the following decade it is reported that the actual number of receivers in Asia increased from approximately 20 to 123 million and in Africa from 5 to 16 million. (UN World Statistics in Brief 1977).

Even if these figures show a rapid development of communication technology in the service areas of RVOG, there are other statistics which show that the distribution of this technology in the world as a whole followed the same pattern of maldistribution as other resources in the world. In 1972 the service distribution index for USA showed that there was one transmitter for each 1.600 sq.miles while the

comparative figure for Africa at the same time was one transmitter for each 96.000 sq.miles. The distribution within the continent of Africa was also uneven, which meant that there was even less than that in most parts of the continent. (Head 1974:6). Comparative statistics of radio sets at the same time show the same imbalance. While USA had 325 million radio sets or 1.4 per individual, Africa had only 16 million or 0.04 per individual. (UN World Statistics 1977). At the same time it is pointed out that "radio is the only medium in Africa able to scale the triple barrier of illiteracy, distance and transportation" (Head 1974:5).

It was in this technological setting that RVOC was established to provide the churches in these areas with modern facilities for public communication and in this way assist them in their ministry and mission. This was done at a time when radio broadcasting was no longer at an experimental stage, but had become a reliable tool which the churches were able to make use of. It has been suggested that 1948 was the year when the Christian Church began to realize the usefulness of radio in her evangelism outreach. It was this year that the Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) began transmissions from its new station in Manilla on the Philippines. It was also this year the planning of what should be known as Trans World Radio (TWR) started. 1948 was also the year when a meeting in Cairo proposed that NECC should plan for a radio station. At the same time, there was also a group of Christian students at Wheaton College in the USA which discussed the setting-up of a "West Africa Broadcasting Association" (WABA), which later should be formed and join the Sudan Interior Mission in the establishing of the Monrovia radio station in Liberia (ELWA). (Kennedy 1980:55).

Even if it may be true that it was at this time that the Christian Church realized the usefulness of radio on a large scale, the real beginning was much earlier. The first church service is reported to have been broadcast over radio in 1921 from Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburg, USA. (Kennedy WMTH 1979:71). The use of local government and commercial radio networks for broadcasting of Christian programs was already common in the second part of the 1920's and the following decade in countries where Christianity was the official religion.

The first Christian radio stations were established in the 1930's. Following experimentation by British missionaries 1927-1929 on Iceland (Schmidt 1974:24-25), two important Christian broadcasting institutions were established in 1931. The Roman Catholics were first with their Radio Vaticana, which started with a small transmitter given to the Pope by Marconi. The other station, which was built in 1931, was the Evangelical "Voice of the Andes" (HCJB) in Ecuador. Both of these stations have now been in operation more than fifty years and have expanded into powerful broadcasting institutions which cover large areas of the globe.

After this beginning, there was a period of almost 20 years when only a few radio stations were built in China, India and Brazil - stations which were small and short-lived. (Schmidt 1974:42-49).

From the middle of the century, radio broadcasting in general shows a sharp increase and religious broadcasting - both Christian and Muslim - shows a similar development. Allan Franzén has, in his book "Evangelium i Etern", given a detailed description of this development. In summary he has arrived at a figure of more than 200 Christian radio stations outside USA which today are owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Church. Most of these stations are relatively small. Only two of them have an international coverage, namely Radio Vaticana in Rome and Radio Veritas on the Philippines. There are no exact figures of how many Protestant radio stations there are in the world, but Franzén suggests that there are well over 1.000, of which only about 20 have a transmitting power of 50 KW or more. (Franzén 1979:95).

Again, it is noted that Asia and Africa are poorly covered by Christian broadcasting. At the time when RVOC was established there was only one Christian broadcasting institution in Africa and only three in Asia. By 1975 there were five in Africa and eight in Asia. To this should be added that local - usually government owned - radio stations in Africa and Asia as well as transnational stations outside these two continents, transmitted Christian programs into these areas. This was, however, on a very limited scale due to government restrictions.

At the same time, radio was used from outside on a large scale for political and commercial purposes. It has been pointed out that "the air waves over the continent of Africa were besieged day and night with a barrage of radio programs,most of which came from everywhere but Africa". (Esayas 1981:72)

Against this general background and with the stated objective in mind, it is not a question of whether RVOG was needed, but rather of how it should be able to meet the need and serve the churches in a meaningful way.

1.3. The Conceptual Framework

The radio project was presented for consideration and action at the annual meeting of CWM in August 1958. Prior to that, the idea had, over a period of time, gone through a process where it had been shaped and reshaped. In this process a conceptual framework had gradually developed, which included the understanding of how radio could be used in the mission of the Church as well as what kind of structure and scope the project should have. This conceptual framework was naturally influenced by contemporary trends but was ultimately shaped by rational thinking and planning.

We have already mentioned the global optimism which marked much of future planning at that time, and the hope for a better future which the "technological age" had brought with it. There was also a general fascination of the possibilities which communication technology offered. Political developments in the world at large, national independence for countries previously under colonial rule and the emergence of indigenous leadership on the political as well as the church level, were all factors which contributed to the creation of a "climate" conducive for the LWF radio project. Dr. Sigurd Aske - the first Director of RVOG - when responding to the question of how RVOG came into being, said some years later: "In the last analysis it was perhaps the creation of a climate - a church climate - rather than the deliberate and conscious planning of one or more people." (Aske, IRM, July 1967:335). There was, however, also a "deliberate and conscious planning" which shaped this project and made it what it was. The process in which the idea of using radio in the mission of the Church developed into a concrete project, can be traced back to November 1955, when the first All Africa Lutheran Conference met at Marangu, Tanganyika. As mentioned earlier, this conference had, in one of its statements, recommended to the African churches to make use of radio in their evangelism outreach. (Marangu

Report, LWF/DWM 1956:112). Commenting on this recommendation, Dr. Menkir Esayas has said: "These words ... mark the first time that the united voice of the African Lutheran churches called for an intensive communication effort, that would use radio as a means of education, proclamation and development." (Esayas 1981:63).

It is important to note that this happened two years before the idea of an LWF radio ministry was presented. It can therefore be said that when the radio project was proposed by LWF, it was not a foreign idea to the African church leaders. At the same time, it must also be said that the Marangu recommendation does not seem to have generated much enthusiasm or resulted in any concrete initiative in the African churches. There is no visible link between the Marangu statement and the LWF initiative. It is, however, likely that the creation of "a church climate", which Dr. Aske talked about, started at Marangu.

The actual development of a conceptual framework of the LWF radio project took place in the period 1957-1962, and we shall here briefly review the development of this process from three aspects.

1.3.1. The Vision

It has often been said that the idea of an LWF radio ministry came to Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, who at that time was Director of the LWF Department of World Mission, when he, travelling in Africa, "saw a group of people clustered under a tree, listening to the magic box." (Van Deusen 1968:56). It is true that Birkeli during a trip in Africa 1956 was impressed by the apparent impact which radio seemed to have on people in African villages, but there is no evidence that one single experience at any particular time or place gave him the idea or the "vision" of an LWF radio ministry. He has admitted himself that he was not sure if the hopes of an LWF involvement in active radio evangelism came to him in 1955 or 1956. (LWFBS.EC.a. 1963:2).

At the same time, there is no doubt that Birkeli had "a vision" and that he was faithful to it. What is important to note here is the fact that what Birkeli actually envisaged was a radio evangelism ministry and that there were no contours of a radio station owned and operated by LWF.

Birkeli's concept of an LWF involvement in radio work was a decentralized structure and the use of existing facilities wherever possible. He talked about "radio missions" and "broadcasting stations". (LWF Assembly Proceedings 1957:108-109). The same concept is also reflected in other reports and official documents from 1957. The change came in 1958 and was, as we shall see later, a result of rational planning. Before we follow up on the question of how and why the idea of a decentralized radio evangelism ministry changed into one powerful broadcasting station, we shall look at the motives behind the envisaged radio project and the ultimate purpose of it.

1.3.2. The Purpose

As most mission strategists at the time, Birkeli and his immediate successors in the radio project were fascinated by the apparent potential which this medium seemed to have in evangelism outreach. Birkeli was convinced that the employment of radio should greatly strengthen the Christian world mission and should take the Gospel message beyond the areas which could be reached through traditional methods. He therefore challenged the LWF General Assembly in Minneapolis 1957 by asking: "Can we really justify the fact that we, as a world family of churches and missions, have thus far not done anything substantial to reach much wider than our men and women can - for instance by radio?". He went on by saying: "We simply cannot afford to go on using only the old methods. The Lutheran Church must also conquer the air! We must try to assist every mission and every church in Africa and Asia with an extensive radio service. I am tempted to say, that we must do so, no matter how much it might cost." (LWF Assembly Proceedings 1957:108-109).

Birkeli was apparently so convinced that radio was an indispensible instrument in world mission, that he was prepared to disregard the cost factor. It is also interesting to note that through 1960 the LWF radio plans were, in all official documents, referred to as "Radio Evangelism in Asia and Africa." It was the mass media aspect - the broad coverage - which dominated the early concept of the LWF radio project. This was also the generally accepted understanding of "missionary radio" at that time. Most of the Christian radio stations had grown out of zeal for world evangelization and there was a firm conviction that effective evangelism could be done by radio.

It is also obvious that it was precisely this element in the early concept of the radio project which generated interest among the churches and mission agencies and motivated them for the financial support of it from the very beginning.[1] The church and mission leaders who were gathered at Sigtuna for the LWF/CWM meeting in August 1958, when the project was approved, "expressed enthusiasm for taking up radio as a means of evangelism ... There was no expression doubting that radio evangelism was a task of LWF", it is said in the minutes. (LWF/CWM.m. 1958:15-16).

At the same time, records from the early discussions about the project also clearly indicate that radio was not considered an effective tool in evangelism outreach on its own. It was considered useful only if there was at the same time a person-to-person communication and a systematic follow-up by the local church. Even at the time when the proposal was first presented in 1957, the agenda item was introduced with the following statement: "It is evident that personal man-to-man contact will always remain the basic method in evangelistic outreach. It is indispensible that, if an interested person is to be led to Christ and become a Christian, such contact take place." (LWF/CWM.a. 1957:13). Concern for church involvement and effective follow-up work was also repeatedly expressed in discussions about the project in the early years. At the 1958 meeting of LWF/CWM the question was asked: "Do we really reach people when we talk to them by air?" In the ensuing discussion it was strongly emphasized that the radio committees of the churches in Africa and Asia would have to develop a pattern for follow-up work different from that used by some other Christian broadcasting agencies. (LWF/CWM.m. 1958:16).

These considerations indicate an early awareness of the obvious limitations of radio in evangelism outreach. At the same time as the LWF conceptual framework was marked by a contemporary over-estimation of the "missionary power" in radio evangelism, there was also a clear rejection of radio evangelism on its own, which some other Christian radio stations were practicing. There was a clear church orientation.

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1) Promotion material like "Missions-sender Africa" and articles in Evangelische Welt and Lutherische Monatshefte, published in Germany as well as a number of articles in "LWF-Nytt" published by the Swedish National Committee of LWF are examples of that.

As this early understanding of radio evangelism developed over the years, it gave RVOG its specific profile both with regard to its church orientation and its broadcasting philosophy. The question of whether the RVOG approach was right and whether the early expectations with regard to its effectiveness were met, shall be taken up later, in light of its own experience and research findings.

1.3.3. The Structure

The LWF Commission on World Mission was, at its meeting in 1957, more inclined to pursue the decentralized/ecumenical model which Birkeli had envisaged, than the centralized/Lutheran model which was chosen a year later. It had been resolved in 1957 to explore the possibilities of a joint action with the LUTHERAN HOUR, (a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod related broadcasting agency) and RAVEMCCO (Radio, Audio-Visual Education and Mass Media Committee of the National Council of Churches in USA). (LWF/CWM.m.1957:22).

Between that meeting of CWM and the next, which was held at Sigtuna, Sweden, in August 1958, the concept of the radio ministry had undergone a radical change. The proposal presented at that time envisaged one powerful radio station, owned and operated by LWF. This change had taken place in the first half of 1958. The Department of World Mission had a new leadership at this time. Dr. Arne Sovik had taken over as Director after Birkeli and Dr. Sigurd Aske had assumed the position as Associate Director in early 1958. As one of his first assignments, Aske was asked to work on the radio project.

When he started to put all the facts and findings together, the picture began to look different compared with what had been envisaged earlier. Two major factors seem to have contributed to this change. The first had to do with the fact that explorations of a possible joint action with the LUTHERAN HOUR and RAVEMCCO had not been encouraging. (LWF/CWM.a.1958:9). The second was a rational assessment of the operational feasibility of the project. This assessment was based on a number of considerations, of which the following seem to be most important:

- Post-war experience in raising funds towards mission projects had shown that interest for small projects was generally luke-warm. It was therefore felt that to buy time here and there would not "catch on" among

the supporting agencies. In order to secure sufficient and regular support, it would be necessary to do something different in scope and approach.

- Investigations about available broadcasting facilities had shown that there were not enough such facilities to meet the needs if LWF opted for the decentralized model.
- For a complex operation of the envisaged scope, it was considered preferable to have one central operation in one place rather than many different operations to administer.
- An independent radio station would also allow more flexibility with regard to the broadcast schedule and strategy. It would be easier to build up an audience, engage expertise and establish a professional reputation.[2)]

With these arguments, the project was approved. A conceptual framework of the project had in principle been adopted. There was a common understanding of the purpose and how the objectives should be achieved. Operational policies and broadcasting strategies within this framework should remain issues of constant review throughout the lifetime of RVOG, as we shall see in the following, but the basic principles had been adopted.

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2) These considerations are partly reflected in the Memorandum which was presented to the LWF Executive Committee in October 1958 and partly based on a personal interview with Dr. Aske.

PART TWO

THE BROADCASTING INSTITUTION

THE BROADCASTING INSTITUTION

As we have seen in the previous section, it was in the early planning of the project that the original "vision" of a decentralized radio ministry was changed into one central radio station. Although the objective remained unchanged and the radio evangelism ministry became an integral part of the institution, we shall for practical reasons deal with them separately. In this section we shall basically deal with the institutional aspects of RVOG.

2.1. The Preparatory Stage (1957-1959)

Until the time when Emperor Haile Selassie granted LWF permission to establish a radio station in Ethiopia, we can say that the project was in its planning period. It is difficult to say when this actually started but in preparation for the annual meeting of CWM and the Third Assembly of LWF, during the first part of 1957, plans for the radio project began to take form. We can therefore say that from early 1957 through 1959 the radio project was in its preparatory stage.

2.1.1. Initial Actions

When the Commission on World Mission met in Staten Island, New York, in August 1957 under the chairmanship of Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, "Radio evangelism in Asia and Africa" was on the agenda for the first time. Staff had prepared the presentation of this item well, not only by giving necessary background information, but also by raising a number of important policy questions and recommending certain actions. CWM referred the proposal to its General Africa Committee for study and recommendation to the plenary. The result was, however, not what Birkeli and his colleagues had expected. The Committee, which consisted of church and mission representatives from Africa, presented a vague statement to the effect that further efforts should be made in the field of radio evangelism for Africa. The minutes from the meeting do not indicate how the discussion in plenary went, but the action taken reflects a lack of real interest.

The Commission instructed its Department to explore the possibilities of joint action with the LUTHERAN HOUR and RAVEMCCO, as we have already mentioned. Should this exploration give a negative result, the Department was authorized to invite a radio expert to make a survey of the situation regarding religious broadcasting in Asia and Africa. Missions and churches should also be consulted and a progress report should be presented at the next annual meeting of CWM. (LWF/CWM.m. 1957:22). This action of CWM in 1957 gave the Department the green light to continue the investigations, but not with the encouragement which staff had anticipated. The requested amount of 12.000 US dollars for further explorations had also been reduced to 1.000 US dollars. (Jahn 1973:21).

At the Third General Assembly of LWF which convened a week later in Minneapolis, the Federation at large was challenged by the report of Birkeli, who suggested that LWF should urgently engage itself in an extensive radio ministry. A result of this challenge seems to be the approval of an amended Terms of Reference for the Commission on World Mission, which included the mandate "to stimulate and assist the churches to use the new evangelistic possibilities, provided by our technological age." (LWF Assembly Proceedings 1957:110).

With these two actions, the Department of World Mission had received the necessary mandate to continue the preparatory work.

A year later, when the Commission on World Mission convened at Sigtuna, Sweden, the proposal requested by the previous meeting was presented. In contrast to the 1957 meeting, the presentation of the radio project was at this time received with enthusiasm. The action taken at Sigtuna in August 1958 was a unanimous endorsement of the plan to build a radio station somewhere in Africa – a station which should be owned and operated by LWF and be powerful enough to cover the areas of the Federation's mission concern in Asia and Africa. It was now voted to instruct the Executive Committee of CWM to prepare a plan which should be presented for consideration and action at the LWF Executive Committee meeting in October the same year. It was also resolved to solicit the judgement of concerned member churches and National Committees regarding their readiness to support the project financially. This should be done before presentation to the LWF Executive Committee.

On the basis of a detailed memorandum on the project plans prepared by the Executive Committee of CWM and presented by Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, the LWF Executive Committee at its meeting in Strasbourg, France on October 27-31, approved the proposal in principle. (LWF.EC.1958).

With these formal actions, the Commission on World Mission had been given the full mandate to go ahead with the planning of the radio project. In this whole process the churches in Asia and Africa, which should benefit from this project, seem to have played a rather insignificant role. It is true that through their delegates at the CWM meetings 1957 and 1958 their voice was heard, but it is obvious that these churches were not given the same opportunity to express their views and speak their mind as was given to the supporting churches in the Western world. What possible effects this should have on local church involvement in the service areas of RVOG shall be dealt with later on.

2.1.2. Search for a Suitable Location

The two continents which from the beginning were identified as targets for the proposed radio ministry were Asia and Africa. (LWF/CWM.a.1957:13). As the concept of this ministry shifted from a decentralized operation to a broadcasting institution, the search for a suitable location focused on Africa and, already at that time, Ethiopia was considered a viable option. (LWF/CWM.m.1958:16).

Africa was at this time considered to be the "uncommitted continent". (Aske: Lutheran World 1959/60:414). It was a continent with open doors for Christian mission and with fast growing churches which wanted and needed assistance, but it was also a continent searching for its identity.

The media situation in Africa also called for urgent assistance. Robert Van Deusen has noted that "in Africa the trend toward the establishment of Christian radio stations was latest in starting and slowest in developing" (Van Deusen 1968:28). Media statistics at that time support this statement. It is therefore not surprising that the LWF search for a suitable location for its radio station focused on Africa. LWF was also deeply involved in assisting African churches in their ministry and mission at this time, which the Marangu conference and the annual meetings of CWM had shown.

The reasons why Ethiopia was made the first choice are also obvious. The geographical position of Ethiopia was the best possible in view of the intended broadcast area. Even more important was the political status of the country. It was considered unwise to locate the station in a country with a colonial past. Ethiopia was one of the few countries in Africa which had not been under colonial rule, with the exception of a short period under Italian occupation (1936-1941). In addition to these advantages, Ethiopia had also an old Christian tradition and culture. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was already established in the 4th century A.D. and had maintained its position as the official religion of the country through centuries of confrontation with Islam. There was also, at the time when LWF considered Ethiopia a location for its radio station, a small but fast growing Evangelical church with Lutheran tradition and with an outstanding leadership.

All these factors put together made Ethiopia almost an ideal base for the radio station. (LWF/BS.B.m. 1961:Exh./). LWF was not the first organization which had considered Ethiopia a suitable location for a Christian radio station. Already in 1948, when the NECC started to plan for a radio ministry, Ethiopia was mentioned as a possible host country. (Van Deusen 1968:43). In 1950, when students at Wheaton College formed the West Africa Broadcasting Association, Ethiopia and Liberia were the two countries they considered suitable for the radio station they had it in mind to set up in Africa. (Kennedy 1980:28). A year later, the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) submitted an application to the Ethiopian Government for permission to build and run an international radio station in the country. This application was referred to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for consideration and reaction. The leadership of the Orthodox Church apparently did not want more Protestant influence in the country and did, therefore, not respond. The SIM application was never officially rejected but, because there was no response, the SIM "bowed out ... and settled in Liberia". (Memorandum to the LWF.EC of Oct.16,1958).

While LWF was still preparing its plans, the NECC had, after ten years of search for a location at which to build a radio station, sent a delegation to Ethiopia to explore the possibilities there. The visit was fruitful, thanks to the assistance given by Dr. Herbert Schaefer, Field Director of the American Lutheran Mission, and Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, President of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. With their help the NECC

delegation received a positive response from the authorities and, on the basis of that, the NECC submitted a formal application to the Government in May 1958.

Ignorent of the NECC actions, the LWF continued its planning for the radio project. Following the CWM meeting in August 1958 LWM staff had contacted the Ethiopian Ambassador in London, Ato Emmanuel Abraham, who was already well known in LWF circles and a prominent member of the Mekane Yesus Church. He had encouraged LWF to approach the Emperor directly.[1)]

Following the approval of the project by the LWF Executive Committee the last week in October, Director Sovik wrote a personal and confidential letter, dated 24th November 1958, to the President of the Mekane Yesus Church, asking for his advice on how to proceed. This was apparently the first time he heard about the LWF plans and, together with Herbert Schaefer, he was now in the embarrassing situation of having already endorsed the NECC application for a similar project. To clear up this situation, contact was immediately taken with NECC and Government officials. The response received from NECC was not favourable but indicated that there would be no objection from their side. The reaction from Government officials, however, was so positive that Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie and Herbert Schaefer decided to submit Sovik's letter, together with a brief explanation, to the Emperor directly. This was done without further consultation with LWF officials in Geneva and it was received by the Emperor as an official application.[2)]

Only after this was done did Sovik receive information about it through a letter from Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, dated December 26th, 1958. The advice given in that letter was that "the two applications should be allowed to run their course". The LWF officials were confused and disturbed about what had happened and considered withdrawing. Contact was taken with the British Consul in Geneva to discuss the possibilities of establishing the radio station in Tanganyika or Rhodesia.

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1) Correspondence in LWF archive files.

2) Memorandum from Dr. H. Schaefer of July 23, 1979

In the meantime, contact was also made with NECC. It was learned that, although six months had gone by since NECC submitted the application, there was no reaction from the Ethiopian Government. It was also reported that the Emperor had appointed a new committee and given instruction that the two applications should be studied together.[3)]

Behind the positive attitude of the Emperor and some of his men was the fact that they wanted an international radio station established in Ethiopia. The Emperor had regretted that Ethiopia had missed the opportunity when SIM established its radio station in Liberia some years earlier, and he was anxious not to miss this opportunity as well. He wanted to give Ethiopia a leading position in the "new" Africa and he was convinced that a radio station of this kind would enhance his ambition. We shall later see how he, against a massive opposition, pushed his way through and granted the franchise to LWF.

2.1.3. Ownership and Partnership

At its annual meeting 1958, the Commission of World Mission had made it clear that, for reasons mentioned earlier, LWF should own and operate the proposed radio station and that it should carry the name of LWF.(LWF/CWM.m. 1958:16-17). Unforeseen developments should, however, lead LWF into a fruitful ecumenical partnership in spite of the initial confusion and embarrassment which we have mentioned earlier. When all the facts about the situation were known and it had been agreed that the two applications should be allowed to run their course, LWF took the initiative to arrange a meeting where the two organizations discussed the matter and came to a mutual understanding about how to proceed.

The meeting took place in Geneva on June 8-9, 1959. At that time it was still not known which organization would get the franchise. Information received was contradicting. NECC was for many good reasons convinced that their application had a better chance, not least because of the traditional relations between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the ancient churches in the Near East. At its meeting in February 1959, the NECC Executive

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3) Personal interviews with Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie and Dr. H. Schaefer.

Committee had expressed that conviction in the following resolution: "We believe that the application by NECC for Christian broadcasting from Asmara is more likely to succeed than the application by LWF and is more likely, in the long run, to be effective and acceptable but if it should appear that the application from LWF is more likely to succeed, the NECC would be glad to cooperate in their project - provided that suitable guarantees and written agreements are drawn up to ensure our proper participation in it." (Van Deusen 1968:70).

The NECC Executive Secretary, Dr. Harry Dorman, reported from a visit to Addis Ababa a month later, that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had assured him of their support. On the other hand, LWF had also received information that the franchise would most likely be granted to them.[4)]

Robert Van Deusen observes that the uncertainty about which group should get the franchise provided a favourable climate for negotiations at the Geneva meeting. (Van Deusen 1968:70). The agreement, which the two organizations arrived at after two days of negotiations, provided a viable basis for future cooperation which was not always to be easy. It was agreed that the organization to be awarded the franchise should be the owner and operator of the radio station and be known as "Party A". The other organiztion should be "Party B", which meant a privileged partner in broadcasting. Commenting on this arrangement, Robert Van Deusen writes: "The agreement was worked out, with each group hoping that it would later become "Party A", but wanting to protect its interests in case it should become "Party B". Having signed the agreement both parties continued with their planning and fund raising." (Van Deusen 1968:71).

The committee which had been appointed by the Emperor to study the two applications, was not very active. No progress was made and in the fall of 1959 the crown prince, who was the convenor, went on a trip to Europe, from which he did not return until late in the year.

During a visit to Addis Ababa in the last week of November, Aske had an audience with the Emperor. This occasion apparently called the attention

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4) Personal interviews with H. Schaefer and S. Aske.

of the Emperor to the fact that no decision had been made on this matter, which at that time had been with the Government more than a year. On November 27 he therefore convened the Crown Council to discuss this matter and bring it to a conclusion. It is reported that during this session, which lasted six hours, the Emperor was faced with a massive opposition from the Orthodox Church and some conservative politicans but, with the support of the more progressive officials, he decided to grant the franchise to LWF.[5]

Just before midnight that evening, the Emperor personally informed the President of the Mekane Yesus Church, Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, by telephone that the permission was granted.[6] It is important to note that the Emperor was personally involved, because it shows his determination not to miss another opportunity to get an international radio station established in Ethiopia.

It is also against this background that we understand why he favoured LWF over against NECC. The All Africa Lutheran Conference at Marangu in 1955, to which he was invited but unable to come, had impressed him. He had realized that LWF was deeply involved in Africa, where it also had several member churches. To grant the permission to LWF would therefore serve his interests better than to give it to NECC, which was a regional organization with its main activities outside Africa.[7]

In addition to this main reason why he favoured LWF comes also the fact that several members of the Mekane Yesus Church were known by the Emperor as able and loyal officials in his government. Among them were at that time H.E. Blattengueta Dawit Ogba-Egzy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Ato Emmanuel Abraham, Ambassador to Great Britain. The Minister of the Imperial Court, H.E. Ato Taffera Worq Kidane Wold, had also got his early education in the Swedish Evangelical Mission, from which the Mekane Yesus Church originated, and he had close relations with the leadership of this church. It is therefore likely that these individuals also influenced the decision.

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5) Robert Van Deusen 1968:75 – It is obvious that Dr. Van Deusen is misinformed, when he states that the decision was taken without the Emperor. The LWF news release No.46/59 which he refers to, does not say that. Interviews with Government officials who were present at the meeting also confirm that it was the Emperor who convened and chaired the meeting.

6) Personal interview with Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie.

7) Personal interview with H.E. Ato Emmanuel Abraham.

NECC had already pledged full cooperation in February 1959, in case LWF should become "Party A" and the "Geneva Agreement" of June the same year had confirmed that. When NECC learned that the Emperor had granted the permission to LWF, NECC circulated a memorandum to the members of its Radio Committee, which stated that NECC rejoiced with LWF and called on the committee members to give all their support to the project. (Van Deusen 1968:77).

In the following we shall see how "Party A and B" worked together towards implementation of the project.

2.2. The Implementation Stage (1960-1962)

As soon as the franchise decision was made, a period of intense activity started within LWF, which now had the main responsibility for implementation of the radio project. A number of important and urgent tasks had to be undertaken simultaneously: the organizational structures which had been outlined should now be made operational; the "Geneva Agreement" and the "Party A and B" arrangement had to be interpreted in terms of working relationships; a legal contract with the Ethiopian Government had to be negotiated; building plans should be worked out and personnel recruited; area production studios should also be established at the same time and basic broadcast strategies and policies had to be drawn up.

We shall now see how these tasks were carried out and how the implementation of the project developed in the following two years.

2.2.1. Organizational Structures

There was to begin with some uncertainty as to where in the overall structure of LWF the radio project should belong and what status it should have.

When the LWF Executive Committee approved the project at its meeting in Strasbourg 1958, the question of whether the radio station should be a project of LWF at large, or should be within the Department of World Mission, and how it should fit in with programs of other departments, had been raised. Based on information about similar radio projects, the Executive Committee assumed that legal requirements of the host country would make it necessary to set up a special broadcasting agency and that

ruled out the possibility of making it a program of CWM. It was therefore resolved: "That the radio station be owned and operated by an independent corporation under the supervision of a board". The composition of such a board was also outlined by the Executive Committee. (LWF.EC.m.1958).

As CWM was responsible for the project until a proper structure was set up and a governing board had been constituted, the question was taken up at the annual meeting of CWM at Nyborg Strand, Denmark, in the summer of 1959. Since there was no word from Ethiopia regarding the franchise, CWM was not ready to act on the question of structure at that time, but appointed an adhoc committee to serve until the Corporation and its Board could be constituted. (LWF/CWM.m.1959).

A year later, when the Commission met at Bukoba, Tanganyika, the permission had been granted and the organizational structure had now to be made operational.

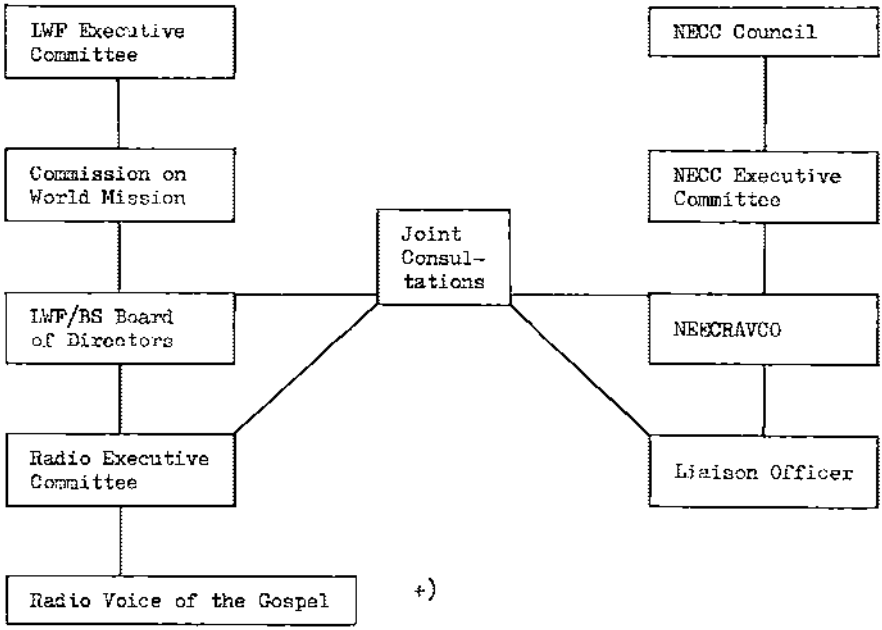
In the meantime, it was discovered that LWF could be registered as the legal owner of the radio station without setting up an independent corporation. It was, however, felt that a project of this size would need an organizational structure of its own. It was therefore decided to set up an LWF Broadcasting Service. In this situation, the earlier question concerning what status this new unit should have had to be raised again. Should the Broadcasting Service administratively be under CWM and its Department or should it be directly under the LWF Executive Committee? The Board of Directors, which had been constituted at this meeting, favoured the second option and an action to this effect was taken. (LWF/BS.B.m.1960:3). The implication of this was that the Broadcasting Service should have a status similar to that of the other LWF Commissions.

When this was reported to the LWF Executive Committee the following year, the proposal was not accepted and it was voted "that in the future the Board of Directors of the LWF Broadcasting Service will report to the Executive Committee through the Commission of World Mission." (LWF/BS.B.a. 1961:6).

By this action, the radio project remained within the Commission on World Mission as a semi-autonomous unit.

The organization structure which resulted from the above-mentioned deliberations and actions is illustrated by the following chart:

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



+) It is noted that in accordance with the "Geneva Agreement" RVOG was placed in the "Party A" structure.

The LWF/BS Board of Directors

The composition of the Board of Directors for the radio project had been drawn up by the LWF Executive Committee at its meeting in October 1958. In accordance with this outline, the voting membership should consist of three categories:

1. The Commission on World Mission should have six seats.

2. Churches and mission societies, which contributed substantially to the annual budget of the radio station, should have one seat each.
3. LWF executive staff should have three seats.

It was also specifically stated that three of the voting members should be Africans.

When this composition was reviewed by CWM at its meeting in 1959, three important questions were raised: 1) Why was no provision made to include radio experts? 2) What was to be considered a "substantial contribution" to the annual budget? 3) What procedure was to be followed to secure membership of three Africans on the Board?

With regard to the first question, it was explained that this was done in order to keep the Board independent in its thinking. When necessary it could seek expert advice from resource persons and from its own staff. The second question was referred to CWM for a proper definition. In response to the third question, it was said that if the required number of Africans could not be found among representatives from contributing churches and mission societies, CWM should propose names to the LWF Executive Committee for appointment. (LWF/CWM.m.1959:18). Reservation of six seats on the Board for members of CWM and three seats for LWF executive staff must be seen as an arrangement to secure stability and continuity in the Board membership. The second category of voting members would most likely not provide for this. Eligibility to this group and the size of it had to do with the interpretation and definition of what "substantial contribution" to the annual budget meant in terms of money. CWM was divided on this issue. Some felt that US dollars 15.000 per year would be a reasonable criteria for voting membership and that those contributing less than that and a minimum of 1.800 dollars should be considered "fraternal members without vote." (LWF/CWM.m.1960:16). Staff and some of the Commission members felt that such a ruling would make voting membership open only to the financially strong groups and exclude the smaller and weaker ones. In order to minimize the danger that the project should be governed by only the wealthy agencies and in order to stimulate support, it was finally agreed that churches and agencies which contributed 1.800 dollars in a given year should be eligible for voting membership on the Board. (LWF/BS.B.m.1960:1).

At the same time as this ruling made it possible for smaller groups to become voting members, it also increased the number and the turnover in the membership. The annual Board meetings became more of a conference than a governing board. At the constitutional meeting, 19 churches and agencies were registered as voting members in addition to the other two categories. It is also noted that the churches which were to benefit from the radio station were poorly represented. Only two churches and one council of churches from Africa took part that time and two of their delegates were missionaries. Asian churches were not represented. This situation did not change much in the following year either.

The mandate of the Board included authority to make final decisions on all matters pertaining to the radio station and its operation with the exception of budgets, which had to be submitted to CWM for approval each year. (LWF/CWM.a.1961,Exh.B.). Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz was elected Chairman and Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie Vice Chairman for the first term. Dr. Sigurd Aske was appointed Executive Secretary.

The Radio Executive Committee

Since the Board was supposed to meet only once a year, a Radio Executive Committee was appointed to carry on business of the Broadcasting Service between meetings of the Board. This Committee, which was appointed by the Board at its constitutional meeting, had the following composition:

- The Chairman of CWM, (Bishop Heinrich Meyer, Germany)
- The Vice Chairman of CWM, (Dr. Fredrik Schiotz, USA)
- The General Secretary of LWF, (Dr. Kurt Schmidt-Clausen, Germany)
- The Director of LWM, (Dr. Arne Sovik, USA)
- One member from Africa, (Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, Ethiopia)
- One area representative for Europe, (Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, Norway)
- One seat was also reserved for a member from Asia, when the Lutheran churches there were ready to become involved in the project. (LWF/BS.B.m.1960:2).

The Ecumenical Partner

When NECC reviewed its organizational structure and amended its constitution in 1958, it was done partly in view of the involvement in a broadcasting ministry. The ad hoc Radio Committee, which had served since 1951, was, in

the amended constitution, given a new mandate and status. It was made a permanent unit in the NECC structure with the responsibility to handle matters related to the radio ministry. This unit was named the NECC Radio and Audio-Visual Committe (NECCRAVCO). In cooperation with LWF/BS, it was this Committee which was the counterpart to the Board of Directors. All RVOG related business which needed action by "Party B" was handled by NECCRAVCO.

In order to keep the administrative lines clear, LWF had taken the position that "the responsibility for making decisions should devolve upon the owner of the station". (LWF/CWM.m.1960). Subsequent to this policy there was no place in the organizational structure where joint actions could be taken. To compensate for that, an arrangement with regular joint consultations was made. These joint meetings not only provided for an indirect participation of "Party B" in the decision making processes, but they actually constituted a professional "brain-trust" from which the station benefited greatly in the following years, as can be seen in the official records.

We shall in the next chapter see how the working relations between the two partners developed during the preparatory stage of the radio project.

2.2.2. Party A and B

It was the decision of Emperor Haile Selassie to grant the permission to LWF which gave the two partners in the radio project their respective roles as defined in the"Geneva Agreement". When that decision was made, it remained for them to interpret and play these roles.

The two organizations had many things in common: both were concerned with communication of the Gospel and were also convinced that this could effectively be done by radio. Their common goal was to strengthen the mission of the Church and they were agreed that it was the local churches which had the prime responsibility in this mission.

The the same time, the two organizations were unequal partners in many respects. The nature of their respective constituences and their organizational structures were different. LWF was global in scope, while NECC was regional. LWF had a constituency of one single confession while

NECC was broadly ecumenical. Deep down the two partners had also a different understanding of the agreement they had both signed in Geneva.[1] In addition to all this, the circumstances which had brought them together in this venture and the following developments had created a certain distance, which was reflected in the cooperation during the first two years.

At the same time, there was a determination on both sides to make the agreement work. The mature handling of their differences demonstrated also the spiritual quality of this ecumenical partnership.

Official documents from this period indicate that there were four problem areas which created certain tension:
1. The decision and policy-making procedures.
2. Relationships on staff level.
3. Publicity and promotion.
4. Representation of non-Lutheran program suppliers.
All of these, with the exception of the last one, had to do with differences in the understanding of the "Geneva Agreement". NECC had envisaged full partnership, which in their understanding would mean joint operation at all levels, except the legal ownership and what was directly related to that. Robert Van Deusen observes that "the hope persisted in the NECC group, that within this administrative framework, the essence of full partnership could still be worked out ... The hard reality, however, was that along with ownership and administrative responsibility, went also the right to make final decisions. Once this fact of life had been accepted, the working relations became more realistic." (Van Deusen 1968:102).

The relationships on staff level were also unsatisfactory. To begin with, the problem was that the NECC staff remained in Beirut too long. LWF/BS staff moved to Addis Ababa as early as it was possible. By the end of 1960 there was a substantial number, including the Station Director and two department heads. NECC had appointed Reverent Harold Fisher to serve as Liaison Officer and Program Coordinator in Addis Ababa, but only in late 1962 did he take up residence there. This fact, in addition to the above-mentioned problem with regard to the lines of responsibility,

1) LWF/BS "Position Paper" of May 28 and the NECC "Position Paper" of May 29, 1962 - LWF/BS.B.a.Exh.2.

resulted in misunderstandings and a certain uneasiness in the cooperation during this period.

Publicity and promotion was another sensitive area. LWF/BS felt that some of the material published by NECC misrepresented the relationship between the two organizations. The problem here was that no definition of the relationship had been formulated and agreed upon.

The fourth problem area, which later should lead to a restructuring of "Party B", had to do with channelling of non-Lutheran programs and the relation to the non-Lutheran program suppliers. The principle of shared program time had been agreed upon from the beginning. This meant that "Party A" should offer "Party B" "the opportunity of an amount of broadcast time approximately equal to its own and the responsibility for producing programs sufficient to fill their time." (LWF/CWM.a.1959,Exh.C.1.) On this basis there was a mutual understanding that NECC should represent non-Lutheran church groups which had a desire to make use of RVOG.

The experience during this period was, however, that this arrangement did not work well. There seemed to be at least three reasons for that: 1) Not all non-Lutheran churches and ecumenical councils wanted NECC to represent them in their dealings with the broadcasting station; 2) The NECC financial and personnel resources were not sufficient to meet the demands of this function; 3) The arrangement made LWF/BS appear strictly confessional and non-ecumenical at the same time as it complicated procedures in dealing with program suppliers.

All these accumulated problems were taken up at a consultation in Addis Ababa on May 21-29, 1962. During these nine days of frank and constructive talks, many of the prevailing problems were resolved and the two partners came closer together in a common commitment to the task they had undertaken. Even if some of the old problems lingered on and new ones should come up, this consultation marked a new phase in the cooperation. (LWF/BS.B.a.1962.Exh.2.)

Following the consultation, NECC took a serious look at the question of relationships to the non-Lutheran groups, and it was decided to set up a special coordinating committee with representation of the regional councils in Africa and Asia,which should seal with issues related to

the use of RVOG.[2] The NECC action came to the attention of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, who was Director of the Department on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (WCC/DWME) at that time. He had been aware of the prevailing problems in the regional councils affiliated to the WCC with regard to their use of the LWF radio station. He therefore took the opportunity to intervene with an aim to bringing about a broader ecumenical participation in the radio project.

In a memorandum to the members of his Commission, dated July 16, 1962, he explained the whole issue and suggested that an informal meeting with all concerned parties should be arranged to discuss this question. His proposal met with the approval of the Commission members and was also well received by the concerned organizations, including NECC.[3]

On August 18, 1962, representatives of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC), the NECC as well as WCC/DWME, LWF/DWM and RAVEMCCO, met at Cité Universitaire in Paris for a two-day consultation. It was from the beginning recognized that the meeting was informal and that the group had no official status. No decisions could be made but suggestions and recommendations could be addressed to the organizations concerned for their consideration and action.

The most important result of that meeting was a unanimous recommendation that a coordinating committee, in line with what NECCRAVCO already had suggested, should be organized. This committee should consist of one member from each of the regional councils and one from WCC/DWME. It was further recommended that each regional council should have a liaison officer with the radio station and "that the councils should provide the Coordinating Committee with sufficient resources to enable it to underwrite the cost of a share in transmission time equal to the time underwritten by the LWF, so that the Christian Councils in the areas served would be in the position to cooperate fully with the Lutheran churches in those areas in using the station." (Report from the Paris Meeting).

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2) NECCRAVCO resolution 62/59, referred to in the Paris Report.

3) Response from NECC to Bishop Newbigin's memorandum, dated July 26, 1962 and signed by Edwin Luidens.

This consultation paved the way for the first restructuring of "Party B", which meant a broader ecumenical cooperation. We shall, in the following, see how this cooperation developed and how it led to the next restructuring, which took place two years later. It should only be added here that the annual meeting of CWM, which took place shortly after the Paris consultation, expressed its satisfaction and full support of the suggested new arrangement. (LWF/CWM.m.1962:17-18).

2.2.3. Government Negotiations

LWS was from the beginning aware of how important a legal agreement with the Government in the host country would be for the implementation and operation of the radio station. In the memorandum to the LWF Executive Committee from CWM, dated October 16, 1958, it was said: "Negotiations with government in those matters call for wisdom, tact and adequate preparations ... The contract is the very basis for operation of the station. All possible care must be taken in working out this document." The Ethiopian Government had also granted the franchise with the understanding that a formal agreement should be negotiated, which should spell out the terms under which the station should become operative.

As soon as the LWF was informed that the permission had been granted, Dr. Jerome J. Jacobsen, a well known lawyer in Geneva with international experience, was consulted for legal advice regarding the impending contract negotiations. He prepared a list of items which he felt ought to be included in the legal document. The following negotiations, which at times should be rather difficult, were carried out in three rounds of talks spread over a full year.

On February 22, 1960, Aske arrived in Addis Ababa for the first session. On the basis of proposals made by Dr. Jacobsen in Geneva and together with Schaefer, he started to work on the first draft. Before the draft was ready, H.E. Ato Taffera Worq Kidane Wold, Minister of the Imperial Court, who had been instructed by the Emperor to carry on initial negotiations with the LWF representatives, called them to the first meeting at the Palace. At that time two major items were discussed. One had to do with location of the station. Taffera Work said that the Government would like the radio station to be built at Baher Dar - a place about 300 km north-west of Addis Ababa. The LWF negotiators replied that

for financial and practical reasons this location was out of the question. There were no adequate communications and transportation costs would make it impossible to consider Baher Dar. The second option which Taffera Work mentioned, was Asmara. Aske said that LWF would be ready to consider this possibility. It was, however, not further discussed at that time. The other major item discussed at that meeting was the question of pre-broadcast censorship. Here the LWF negotiators took the opportunity to make it clar that if the Government insisted on this, LWF would find it unacceptable. They reitrerated the LWF position on this issue several times, because they felt that they could not afford any misunderstanding regarding this matter.

Other issues discussed in that session were the name of the station, the question of free land, exemption from custom duties for technical equipment and building material. These and other questions were further discussed in subsequent sessions. The draft agreement, which had been prepared by Aske and Schaefer, was, by the end of this first round of negotiations, ready to be submitted to the Emperor. It had also been translated into Amharic. Before Aske returned to Geneva, he received a message from the Emperor that the document had been referred to a committee for study and that further talks would be carried out with that committee.[1)]

In the following months nothing happened. In a letter to Aske dated March 31st, Schaefer said that negotiations went slow. Internal political problems were apparently the main reason for that. In another letter, dated May 30th, Schaefer advised against the plan to bring the President of LWF, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, to Addis Ababa for a signing ceremony. He felt that it would be unwise to give the radio station too much publicity at that time for political reasons.

Aske was invited for a second round of talks in June 1960. The start was this time very slow. During the first week he was called to the Palace only once for a brief session. In the meantime, Schaefer had an informal

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1) Report on Government negotiations by Aske, Dated March 10, 1960.

meeting with Dr. John Spencer, an American Lawyer, who was political advisor to the Ethiopian Government. He had indicated to Schaefer that there were three areas in the document submitted to the Government which called for serious consideration. The first had to do with the land question. The LWF proposal was that the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus should be the legal owner of the land and LWF/BS should sign a lease agreement with the Church. Dr. Spencer felt that it would be better to deal directly with the Government.

The other area had to do with exemption from income-tax for expatriate personnel, which was suggested. He felt that this would be difficult. The third area, where he felt more consideration was needed, had to do with the old question of pre-broadcast censorship. He was informed about the LWF firm position on this issue and did not raise any objection, he only suggested that the matter be carefully discussed and that the question of commercial advertisements also should be taken up.

Even if the second round of talks had a slow start, the result was encouraging. By the end of the two weeks stay in Addis Ababa, Aske reported that a revised version of the contract had now been submitted to the Government for final consideration. He was hopeful that during his next visit, which was scheduled for August, the contract could be signed.[2)]

The meeting, which was planned for August, did not take place. Aske was, however, still optimistic, when he reported to CWM in September that "no major problems have arisen or are anticipated. There are reaons to believe that the contract will be signed in the near future." (LWF/CWM.a.1960:8).

No official reason was given for the postponement of further negotiations in the fall of 1960. There were, however, indications that internal socio-political tensions were increasing in the country and that concerned authorities were pre-occupied with other problems so they could not attend to the pending contract negotiations.

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2) Informal report on negotiations in Ethiopia by Aske dated June 23, 1960.

On December 14th, while the Emperor was travelling abroad, the tension, which had been building up over a period of time, burst out into a military coup d'état, staged by some officers in the Emperor's Body Guard. The seizure of power did not last long. A few days later, the Emperor returned and order was restored again.

When the Radio Executive Committee met in Hamburg on January 18, 1961, Schaefer gave a report on the political situation in Ethiopia. Having heard that report, the Committee agreed that there were no reasons to change the plans for the radio station. (LWF/BS.EC.m.1961:1-2).

The third and final round of negotiations began in early February 1961. At that time it was clear that the Government representatives had instructions to speed up the talks and conclude the agreement. These final talks were also the toughest phase of the negotiations.

H.E. Emmanuel Abraham was, as of January 1961, appointed Minister of Telecommunications, replacing H.E. Ato Berhanu Dinke, who so far had been the Government chief negotiator. When the talks started in February, Emmanuel Abraham insisted that Berhanu Dinke should continue and conclude the agreement. He did this mainly in the interest of future relationships with the Orthodox Church, since Berhanu Dinke was a faithful Orthodox. The Emperor accepted this argument and instructed Berhanu Dinke to continue. Emmanuel Abraham served at this time both as advisor to Aske and as liaison with the Emperor.[3)]

On February 15th, 1961, the document was finally signed. Berhanu Dinke signed on behalf of the Government, as instructed by the Emperor. The fact that Emmanuel Abraham had been appointed Minister of Telecommunication at this time was interpreted as another indication that the Emperor was anxious to have a smooth cooperation between the Government and the radio station from the very beginning.

The LWF negotiators had achieved an agreement to their satisfaction on all main issues, including that of censorship. Seen in perspective and in light of the experience over 14 years of operation of the radio station, it is certainly fair to say that the agreement signed on February 15th, 1961, between the Ethiopian Government and the LWF Broadcasting Service, proved to be legally valid and provided for privileges which could not easily have been obtained in any other country.

3) Personal interview with Emmanuel Abraham

2.2.4. Initial Executive Personnel

So far we have dealt with organizational structures, ecumenical cooperation and negotiations of a legal contract, which were the broad issues at the implementation stage of the radio station. No planning and construction could, however, have been done without competent personnel. We shall therefore at this point make a brief presentation of the executive staff, which did the actual job at this stage in the history of RVOG. We shall later come back to the personnel question in general.

Dr. Sigurd Aske, a missionary of the Lutheran Free Church in Norway, who had a long experience in China and Japan, joined the LWF Geneva staff as Associate Director of DWM in March 1958. From that time the radio project, which was still in its early stage, was assigned to him. He devoted a great deal of his time in the following months to studying the matter and drawing up initial plans. In December 1959, when LWF had been awarded the franchise, the Executive Committee of CWM appointed him Director of the project for one year. At its meeting in August 1960, the Commission resolved: "That Dr. Aske be released from some of his other duties as Associate Director of DWM to be Director of the radio project for an indefinite period." (LWF/CWM.m.1960:15). He took up residence in Addis Ababa in September the same year. At the Board meeting in 1961, Aske was made General Director of the LWF Broadcasting Service, (LWF/BS. B.m.1961:6), a position he had until July 1974, when he resigned from the post.

Ato Hagos Legesse was a member of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. He left a high government position in the Chamber of Commerce and joined RVOG as Assistant to Dr. Aske.In November 1963 he was appointed Editor of the medium-wave program. The following year he was given a scholarship for further studies.

Rev'd Allan G. Thompson of the United Lutheran Church in America was appointed Administrative Director of the radio project as of June 1959. (LWF/CWM.a.1959:11). In addition to his theological training, he was also a Technical Engineer, with experience from radio work in the United States. He came to Addis Ababa in February 1960. Before he resigned from his post in June the same year, he did the first technical surveys and drew up the first plans for the technical installation.

Dr. Herbert G. Schaefer, Field Director of the American Lutheran Mission in Ethiopia since September 1957. As mentioned earlier, he was involved in the radio project from the very beginning. As of January 1960 he was appointed Deputy Director and served in this capacity without monetary remuneration until February 1961. (LWF/CWM.m.1960:16). He played an important role as contact person and negotiator of the government agreement together with Aske.

Rev'd Gudmund Gjelsten, a Norwegian Lutheran Pastor and Journalist with experience in public relations and research. He served as Audience Relations Officer from December 1960 to August 1964. He made a first survey of the intended broadcast areas and gathered basic information about felt needs, educational standard of the people and other important data on the potential audiences. He also prepared a handbook on audience relations.

Mr. Erich Kraemer, a Technical Engineer and member of the Lutheran Church of America, was appointed Technical Director as of May 1960 and served in this capacity until the end of 1967. He was designer of the station's technical facilities and was responsible for selection of all equipment. It was also under his supervision that this equipment was installed.

Mr. Thorsten Månson, Field Director of the Swedish Evangelical Mission in Ethiopia, joined the RVOG staff in February 1961 and served as Director of Administration until July 1967. Initially he was in charge of all building construction.

Rev'd Ulrich Fick, a German Lutheran Pastor and professional broadcaster, took up his position as Program Director in September 1961 and served in this capacity until July 1967. He established the guidelines and procedures in program production and implemented the broadcast strategy, which had been set by the Board in consultation with the ecumenical partner.

Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, President of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia, was appointed Advisor on Government and Church Affairs as of May 1962. He had for a number of years been in diplomatic service at the British Embassy in Addis Ababa and he had also experience as judge in Ethiopian courts. He served at the radio station in his origianl capacity until March 1977, when RVOG was nationalized.

Rev'd Harold A. Fisher was a Presbyterian pastor from the USA and a professional broadcaster. He had served as trainer at the Beirut studio for many years. In 1960 he was appointed the NECC Liaison Officer with LWF/BS and Program Coordinator of non-Lutheran programs. In November 1962 he moved from Beirut to Addis Ababa. Soon after that, he was appointed Associate Program Director at the station and served in this capacity until the end of 1965, when his term of service ended.

In addition to the above-mentioned executive personnel, there were also a number of technicians, journalists and administrative staff which served at the station during the implementation period. At the end of 1962 there were all together 70 employees, of which 20 were expatriates and 50 locally-employed. As we shall see later, this number doubled over the next two years.

2.2.5. Building Construction

In April 1960, the Swedish Architect and Director of the Ethiopian Swedish Building College in Addis Ababa, Mr. Ingvar Eknor, had been engaged as Building Consultant and Architect for the radio station. The planning was, however, slowed down because of the unexpected delay in contract negotiations. The political unrest in the country also made the immediate future rather uncertain.

One of the main problems was, however, the land question. No real construction plans could be worked out until there was a site on which the institution should be established.

After the first round of contract negotiations, when it had been suggested that the radio station should be located somewhere other than in Addis Ababa, it seems as if that idea was dropped and it was agreed that it should be in or close to the capital. At the CWM meeting in late August 1960, it was reported that a transmitter site had been agreed upon as technically suitable. It was also reported that "a likely site for studio and administration buildings, where also staff residences could be located, had been found". (LWF/CWM.a.1960:8). It was, however, difficult to acquire this land before the contract had been signed with the Government.

Shortly after the December 1960 upheaval in Addis Ababa was over and life began to be normal again, the owner of the piece of land which earlier had been considered a suitable site for the main station, suddenly wanted to sell it. In consultation with leaders of the Mekane Yesus Church, and with the assistance of Dr. Herbert Schaefer, who was ready to advance the necessary funds for a down-payment, the land was purchased in the name of the Mekane Yesus Church.[1)]

Assuming that all formalities would be settled soon, the Architect began to make some preliminary construction drawings which were presented and, in principle, approved by the Radio Executive Committee in January 1961. (LWF/BS.EC.m.1961:4). A month later, the contract with the Ethiopian Government was signed and the building activities could then go full speed. One of the first things which had to be done was to finalize the pending land question for the main station. It had been agreed that the land should be purchased in the name of the Mekane Yesus Church and a down-payment had been made, but the formal transfer of the title-deed could not be done until the contract with the Government was signed. When this was done, the land was registered in the name of the Church and a lease agreement was signed between the LWF/BS and the EECMY. Through this agreement, the Mekane Yesus Church was not only made owner of the land but, should LWF/BS leave Ethiopia prior to expiry of the contract period, all immovable property on the land should then revert to the Church.[2)]

With regard to the transmitter site, it had been written into the contract that the Government should lease to the Federation the land needed for technical installations.[3)] The formalities involved in obtaining that land were complicated and time-consuming. Not until October 1961 was this land handed over to LWF/BS. The site had, however, been agreed upon much earlier, and preliminary planning could therefore be done in the meantime.

---

1) In a letter to Dr. Schaefer from the Geneva Headquarters, dated January 5, 1961, appreciation was expressed for his assistance by advancing US$ 16,000 for this purpose.
2) Article II in the Agreement signed with the Government.
3) The lease agreement signed with the EECMY and registered at the Addis Ababa High Court on May 12, 1961.

In August 1961, Aske could give a good progress report to the Board. A master plan for the entire institution had been worked out by the Architect. Road construction inside the property as well as construction of the access road from the public highway to the campus was about to be completed. Construction drawings for the administration and studio buildings as well as staff residences were being finalized. (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:1-2).

In early September 1961 a contract for the main construction work was signed with the Italian firm Aldo Ugolotti in Addis Ababa. This contract included the administration and studio buildings, 14 staff residences and the transmitter building. It was agreed that the construction work should be completed not later than mid-August 1962. The order of priority was also specified and deadlines were set for each phase of the construction.

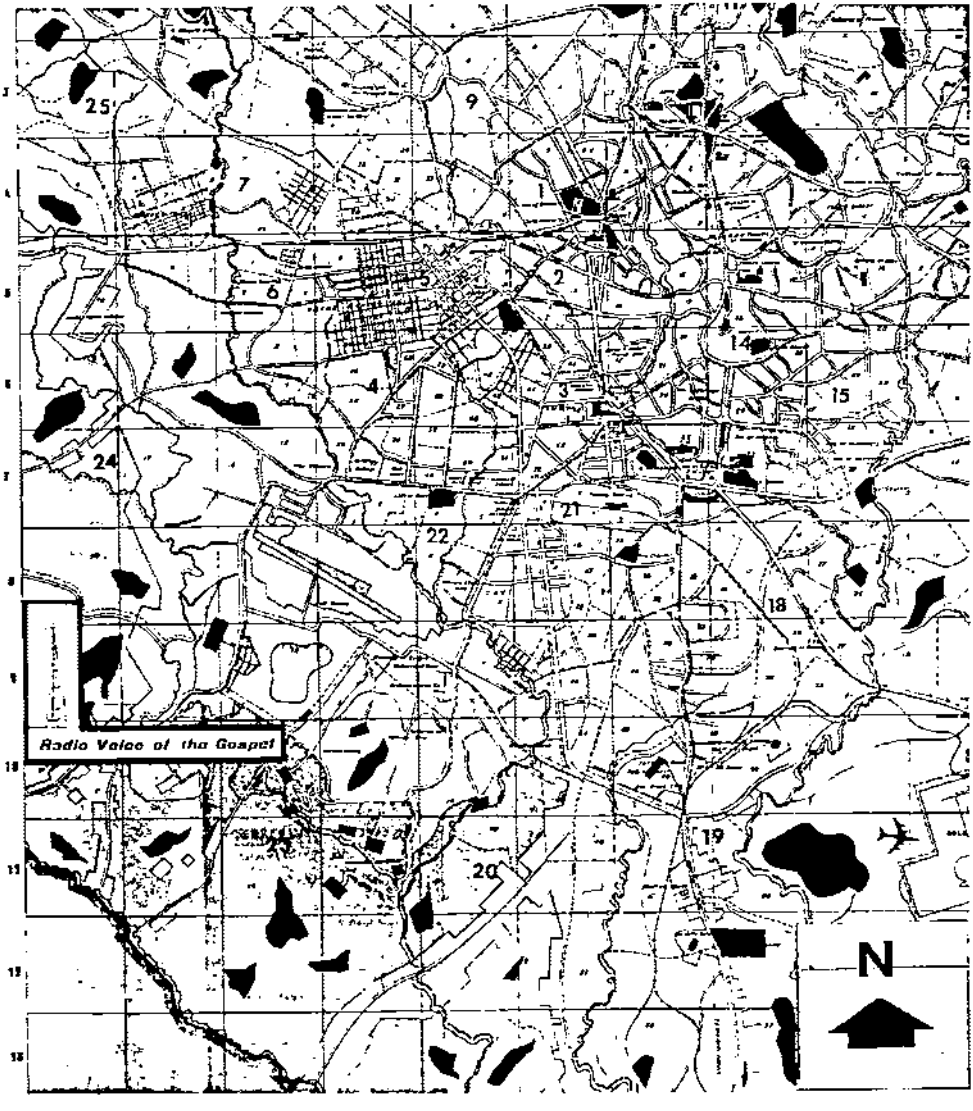
Five months later, when the Radio Executive Committee met in Geneva, Aske gave a detailed progress report on the building activities. He told the Committee that as the construction work was on schedule and the equipment which had been ordered seemed to have been delivered on time, he had alerted the LWF President, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, that a suitable target date for the official opening of the station would be early February 1963. (LWF/BS_EC. a.1962:2).

The building contractor could, however, not keep to the time schedule which had been agreed upon, and this caused some problems, because the rented premises in the city had to be vacated by the end of July.

The offices were moved into the new building as planned, in spite of the inconveniences caused by ongoing building activities. By the end of 1962 most of the construction work was completed. Four additional residences which had been approved later, were also under construction at that time.

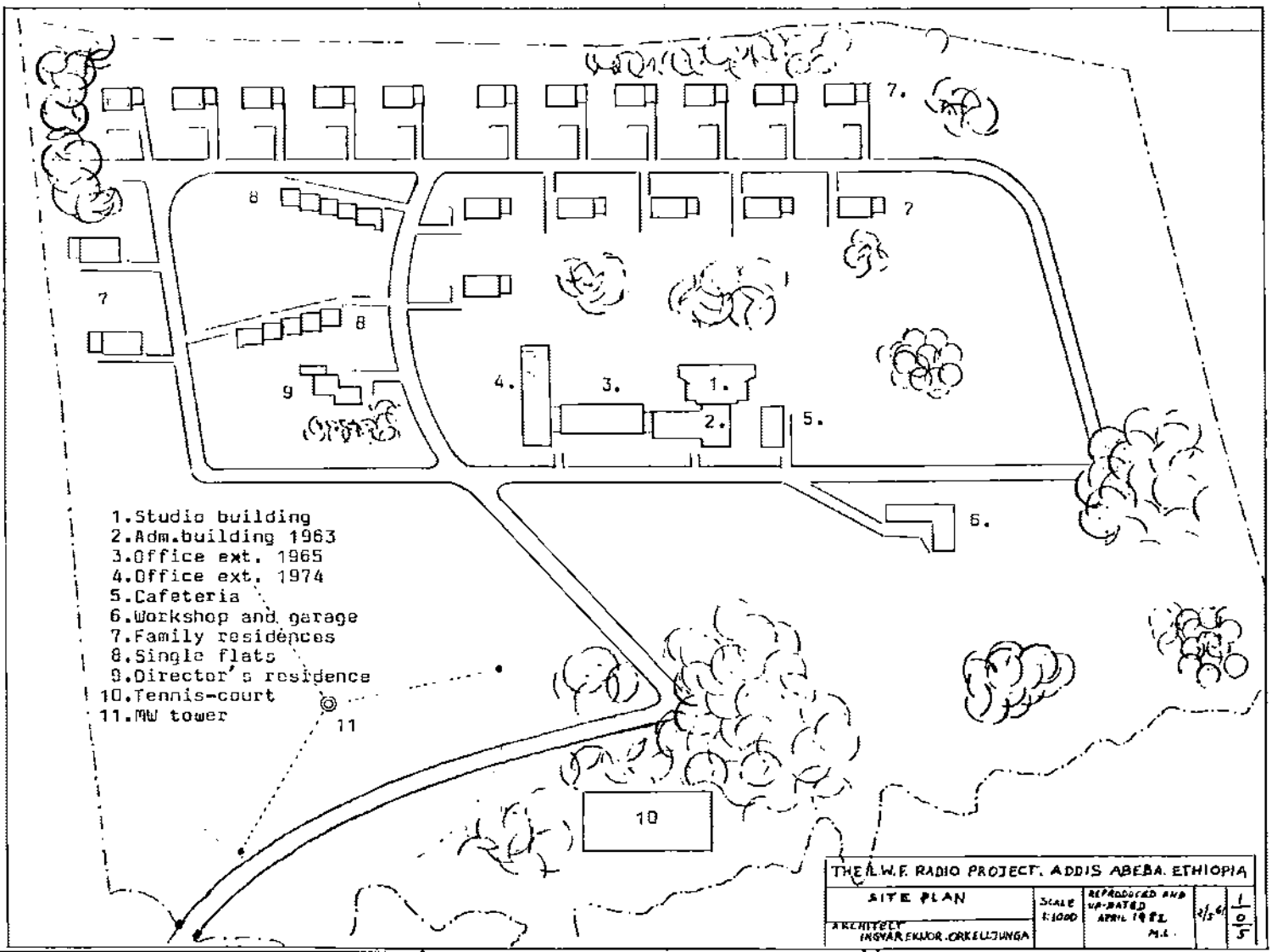
It should be noted that it was only the basic construction of the building facilities which was done by the Italian contractor. All the site work and road construction as well as all technical installations were done by LWF/BS staff. At the 1963 Board meeting, Aske could report that the initial construction stage of the station facilities was completed. (LWF/BS.B.a.1963:6).

CITY MAP OF ADDIS ABABA



Some landmarks:

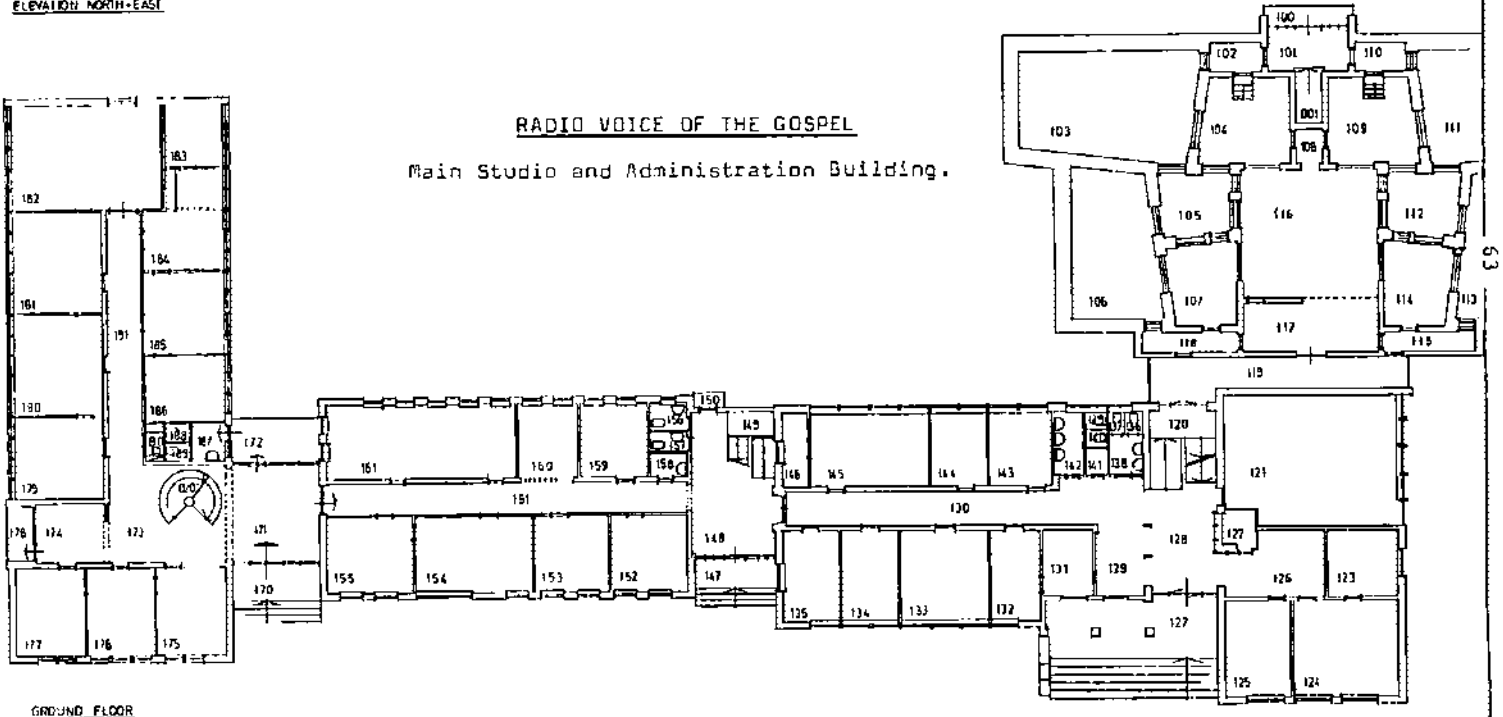
1. Ministry of Information/ S:t Georg Church
2. Tekle Haimanot Sq.
3. Black Lion Hospital/ Adua Sq.
5. Grand Market
14. Old Palace
21. Railway Station/ Mexico Sq.
22. Old Airport


1.Studio building
2.Adm.building 1963
3.Office ext. 1965
4.Office ext. 1974
5.Cafeteria
6.Workshop and garage
7.Family residences
8.Single flats
9.Director's residence
10.Tennis-court
11.MW tower
THE L.W.F. RADIO PROJECT. ADDIS ABEBA. ETHIOPIA
SITE PLAN
ARCHITECT INGVAR EKLUND. ORKELJUNGA
SCALE 1:1000
REPRODUCED AND UP-DATED APRIL 1971 M.E.
4/5 61
1/0/5

ELEVATION NORTH-EAST

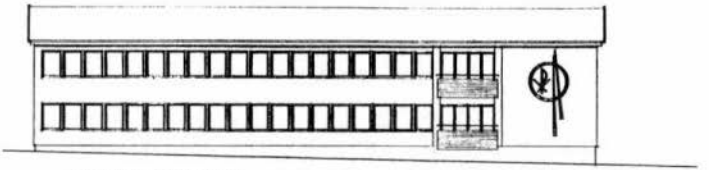
RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL

Main Studio and Administration Building.

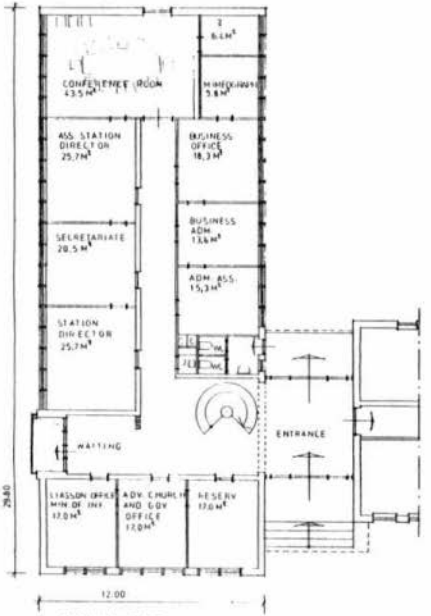


GROUND FLOOR

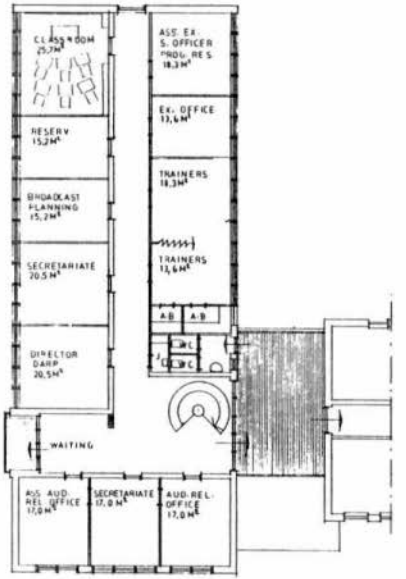
RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL
ADDIS ABEBA ETHIOPIA
ELEVATION N-E
GROUND FLOOR
SCALE 1:100
6421 :61



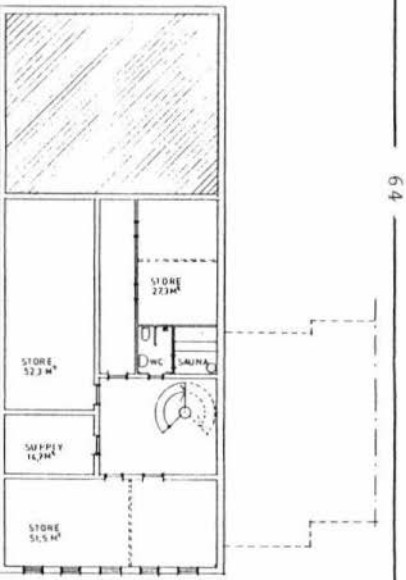
ELEVATION SOUTH-EAST



GROUND FLOOR



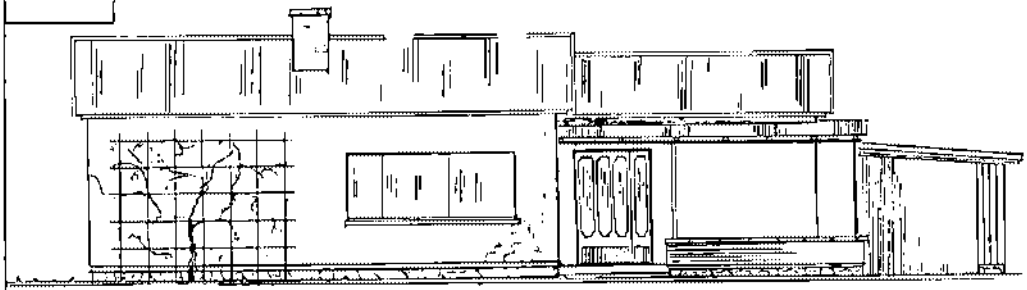
FIRST FLOOR



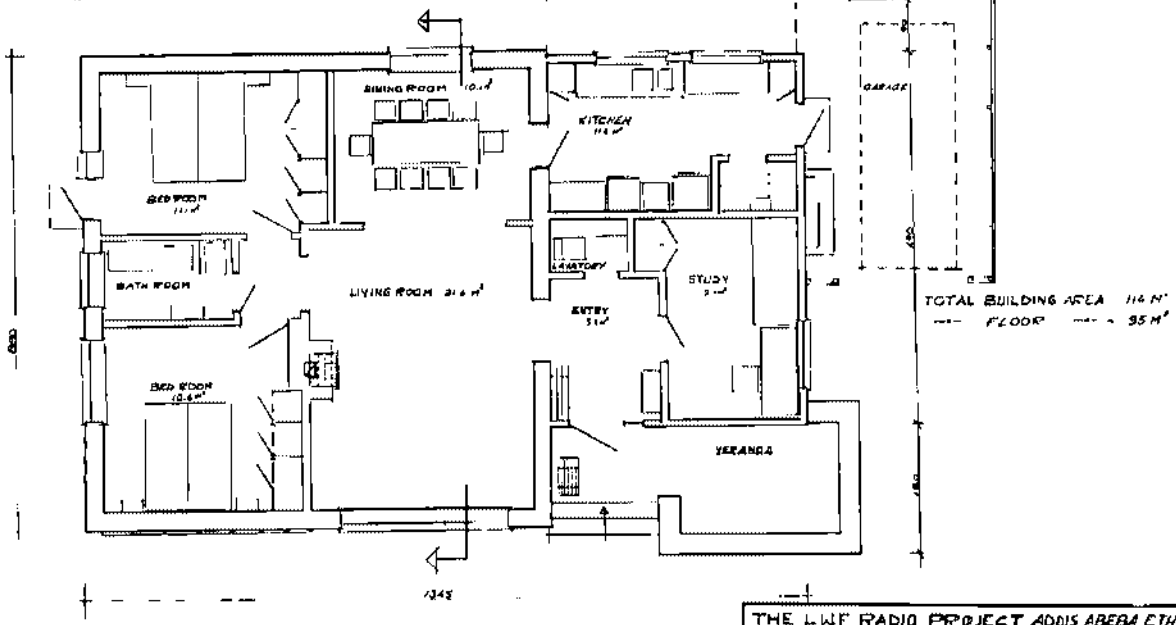
BASEMENT FLOOR

SKOGS ARKITEKTERNA	RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL WF
	ADDIS ABEBA, ETHIOPIA
	NEW WING
	SWEDEN
AA	GROUND FLOOR, ELEVATION S.E
1973-05-24	FIRST BASEMENT — " — SCALA 1:100
	6421:51

64



ELEVATION



TOTAL BUILDING AREA 116 M²
FLOOR 95 M²

59

THE L.W.F. RADIO PROJECT ADDIS ABEBA ETHIOPIA

VILLA TYPE E PLAN	SCALE 1:50		21/4	1 3 50
ARCHITECT				

2.2.6. Technical Installations

Two alternatives for transmitting equipment were considered at the 1958 annual meeting of CWM. One was to build a powerful station right from the beginning, and the other to begin on a small scale and gradually increase its transmitting power by installing more powerful equipment later. The meeting favoured the first alternative, which at that time meant a 50 KW shortwave transmitter with one or more sustaining, less powerful ones. (IWF/CWM.m.1958:16). Within the following two years it was, however, found that what was considered "a powerful station" at that time was unrealistic. If the station was to be able to stand the competition and be able to provide an audible signal in the prospected targets, the power had to be increased to at least 2 x 100 KW.

This drastic change in the original plans was reported to CWM and approved at the annual meeting in 1960. (IWF/CWM.m.1960:15).

Planning of the technical facilities of the radio station was the most important and called for high-level technical expertise. First of all, the selection of a suitable location for the transmitting station was complicated. The site had to meet a number of criteria including road accessibility - not too far from the main station - reliable electric power supply - a soil condition able to carry the heavy antenna constructions - there should be no horizon obstruction in the direction of broadcast targets and a "line of sight" between the transmitter site and the main station in order to install a communication link.

After a first survey made by Allan Thompson in 1959 and early 1960, three possible sites, south of the city, were considered. It was, however, soon discovered that the Government had already chosen the best one for its new transmitting station. The second best was an area 30 km south of the site, which had been proposed for the main station. (see map). The Government, who owned that land, had, in principle, agreed that upto 300 acres or 1.2 million sq.m. in that area might be made available for the IWF station. From the time at which these initial talks with Government authorities took place until the time when the land was actually made available, over 18 months had passed by. Not only the Imperial Board of Telecommunications (IBTE), but also the Air Force and the Civil Aviation authorities had to give their permission.

In the meantime, a public tender for transmitting equipment had been circulated to various manufacturers in the USA, Europe and Asia. When the bids were opened on May 5, 1961, it was found that the lowest was from Brown Boveri & Company Ltd., in Switzerland. A month later, the contract for delivery of two shortwave transmitters of 100 KW each was signed. The contract also included supervision of the installation of them.

Since it was difficult to devise a meaningful tender for the antenna system and a company in Mannheim, West Germany, which was affiliated to Brown Boveri & Company in Switzerland had given a reasonable price quotation, it was decided to make Brown Boveri the prime contractor for the entire transmitting facility.

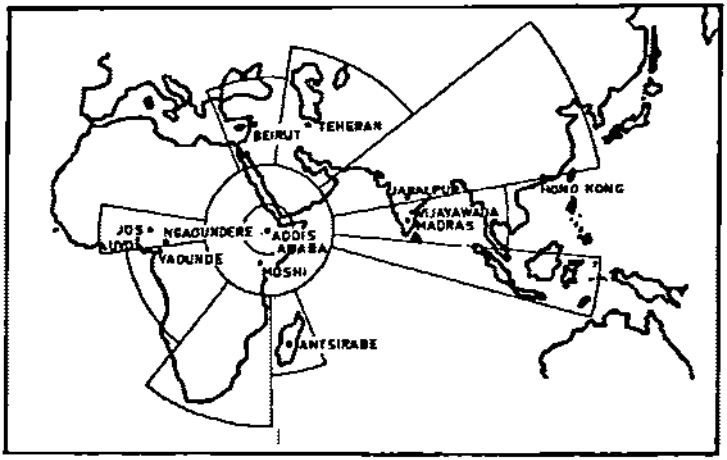
The year 1962 was a hectic one for the technical staff which had increased to 14 engineers, not only from western countries but also from Ethiopia. In May the erection of antenna towers began and in June the transmitter building was ready and installation of the transmitters could begin.

The antenna system which had been chosen was the so-called "curtain" antenna. These antennae were reversible and slewable and thereby provided the flexibility needed to cover all the broadcast targets within the defined structure. For financial reasons, the initial construction provided only for broadcasting on meterbands usable for the phase of the sunspot cycle from 1963 to 1966. An extension of the antenna construction was therefore needed before the end of that period.

Only one of the shortwave transmitters was installed and operational when the station was inaugurated. The second one was not ready until early May 1963.

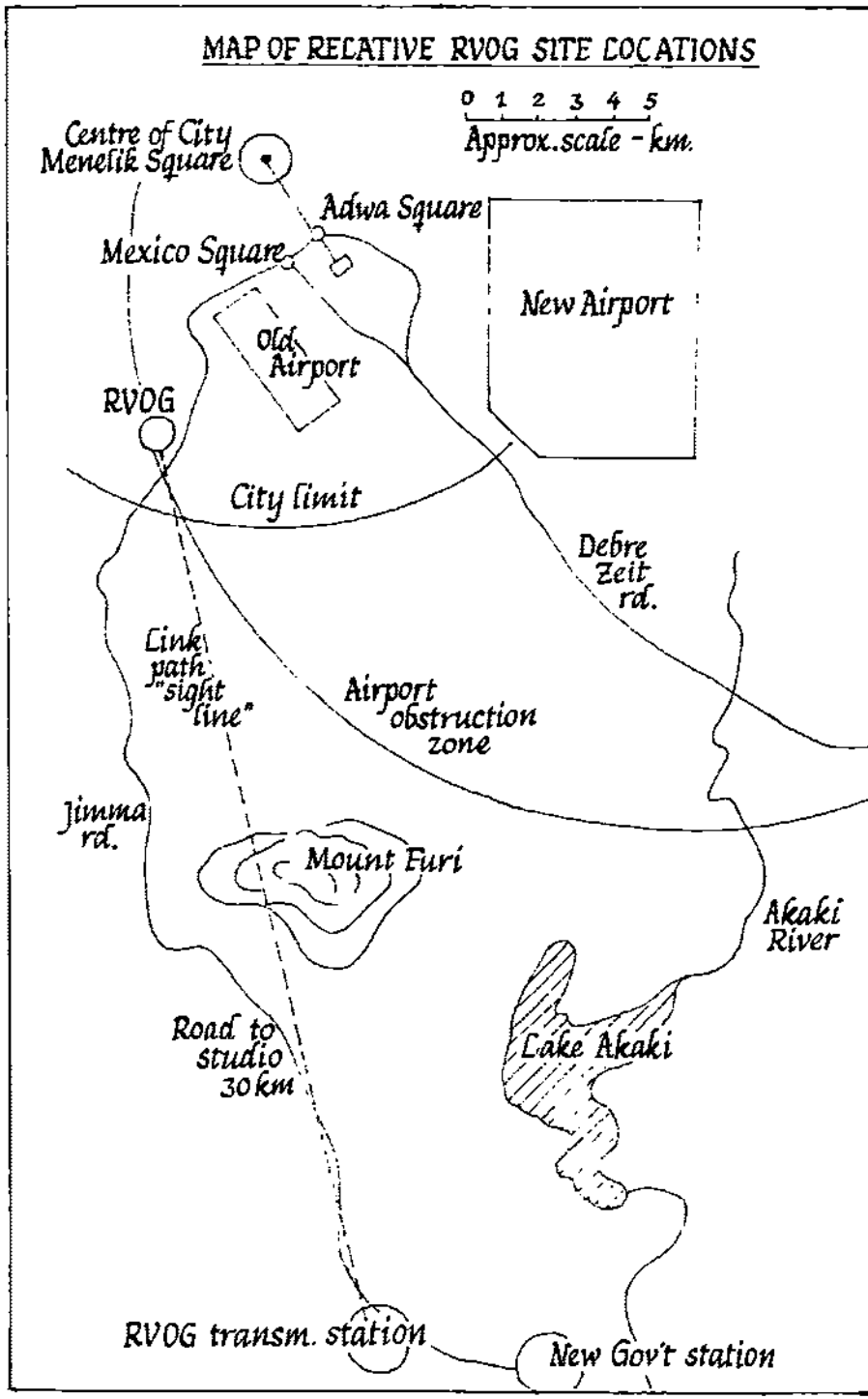
During the year when the regular transmitting equipment was being installed, test transmissions were carried out with a 1 KW shortwave transmitter, which had been assembled by the technical staff. These tests gave a first indication of the listenability in the prospected service area of the station. Brown Boveri had also in the meantime donated a 1 KW mediumwave transmitter to LWF/BS, which was installed at the main station. It was intended primarily for Addis Ababa, but covered a wide area around the city as well. Regular mediumwave transmissions started in September 1963.

The studio section at the main station, including the "Master Control Room" and the recording studios, should have been ready for installation of the technical equipment in the Spring of 1962. Due to problems with the ventilation system, the installation was delayed about six months. Only in December 1962 - three months before the opening of the station - could the technicians begin with this important section of the technical facility. By working "around the clock", they managed to get the Master Control ready for the inauguration of the station on February 26, 1963, when the transmitter was "switched on" and regular broadcasting began.[1)]



RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL ANTENNA COVERAGE

1) Further facts about the technical facilities of RVOG and equipment are found in the "Final Engineering Report on RVOG" by Erich Kraemer and Kebede Gobana, dated September 1965.


MAP OF RELATIVE RVOG SITE LOCATIONS
0 1 2 3 4 5
Approx. scale - km.
Centre of City
Menelik Square
Adwa Square
Mexico Square
New Airport
Old Airport
RVOG
City limit
Debre Zeit rd.
Link path "sight line"
Airport obstruction zone
Jimma rd.
Mount Furi
Akaki River
Road to studio 30 km
Lake Akaki
RVOG transm. station
New Gov't station

2.2.7. Capital Investment

When the LWF Executive Committee approved the radio project in October 1958, the capital cost was estimated at US$ 400,000. This estimate was not based on actual project plans, but on information gathered from similar projects and on the assumption that a shortwave transmitter of 50.000 watt power would be adequate and satisfactorily serve the intended purpose. (LWF.EC. 1958). NECC had made similar calculations and arrived at even lower figures. (Van Deusen 1968:260).

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it was soon realized that the transmitting power of the station had to be substantially increased in order to provide a reliable signal in all the prospected target areas. This also meant that the estimated capital cost was unrealistic. The new plans called for between 800,000 and 900,000 US dollars, which exceeded the original estimate by more than 100% (LWF/CWM.m.1960:15). A year later this amount was also exceeded and the Board expressed concern over the financial developments. (LWF/BS.B.m.1961:2).

When all the bills were paid, including the antenna extension and a new office wing, constructed in 1964/65, the total capital investment had reached the amount of US$ 1,853,800.

In accordance with the "Geneva Agreement" of 1959, "Party A" was the owner of the radio station, which also meant responsibility for the raising of necessary funds. There was, however, also a clause which said that "Party B" should be offered the "privilege of investing capital funds in the station up to 50% of the total station investment as a long-term loan, the share subject to the needs of party A." (LWF/CWM.a.1959, Exhibit C.1.).

On the basis of this agreement, NECC made available from the start an interest-free long-term loan in the amount of US$ 250,000. In addition to this, a cash contribution of US$ 78,000 was made later, of which US$ 64,000 was earmarked for the antenna extension and the rest should be used towards construction costs for NECC staff residences.[1)]

1) These residences were later turned over to RVOG without compensation and the amount was entered as a contribution from CCIB. Cf.CCIB minutes January 13, 1964.

Following an agreement of cooperation with the Missouri Synod related LUTHERAN HOUR in 1960, this organization also contributed US$ 100,000 towards the RVOC capital investment. The remaining amount of more than US$ 1,5 million was raised by the LWF member churches, mainly in Europe and the United States.

The fact that all capital costs,with the exception of the NECC long-term loan, were covered when the radio station was ready, reflects the tremendous interest which this project had generated in the LWF constituency.

The following tables show the breakdown of expenditures and contributions up to the end of 1966.

Capital Expenditures as of December 31st, 1966 (LWF/BS.B.a.1967)

	US$
Land	74,470
Building construction	554,171
Furniture	57,676
Technical equipment and installation	1,121,084
Transport	12,000
Car loan fund	34,400
Total US dollars	1,853,801

Contribution towards capital investment (LWF/BS Report 1970)

	Churches	Individuals
Argentina	24.90	
Australia	271.49	
Austria	502.02	
Brazil	155.00	162.50
Canada	7,795.37	952.50
Chile		20.00
Denmark	3,637.90	
Ethiopia		85.17
Finland	8,000.00	
France	273.24	398.07
Carried forward	20,659.92	1,618.24

Contributions continued:		Churches	Individuals
Brought forward		20,659.92	1,618.24
Germany:	National Committee	552,606.36	784.09
	Bethel	239.52	
	Leipzig	239.52	
	Bremen	6,250.00	
	Berlin/Brandenburg	7,500.00	
	Baden	16,000.00	
	Rheinland	12,500.00	
	Westfalen	25,000.00	
	Hessen-Nassau	13,750.00	
Great Britain			145.70
Hungary			53.78
Iceland		84.56	
Italy		427.37	
Jordan		15.00	
Liberia		667.73	
CCCB ("Party B" incl.NECC & WACC)		78,000.00	
The Netherlands		31.40	
New Guinea			219.01
Norway		23,362.26	2,677.04
Sweden:	National Committee	96,668.97	
	Church of Sweden	9,668.81	
	Kyrkohjälpen (Swedish Church Aid)	195.95	
	Swedish Evangelical Mission (E.F.S.)	527.47	
	Swedish Israel Mission	452.52	
Switzerland		511.58	19.15
Uganda			14.00
U.S.A.:	National Lutheran Council	460,000.00	3,419.89
	United Lutheran Church (U.L.C.A.)	36,033.00	
	Evangelical Lutheran Church (E.L.C.)	15,000.00	
	American Lutheran Church (A.L.C.)	18,070.94	
	Augustana Luth.Ch.	12,000.00	
	United Ev.Lutheran Church (U.E.L.C.)	2,000.00	
	Luth.Ch.of America (LCA)	429.33	
	LUTHERAN HOUR - Missouri Synod	100,000.00	
Undesignated sources		1,948.67	
NECC long-term loan		250,000.00	
LWF/CWM		84,010.36	
		1,844,850.83	8,950.90
Individuals		8,950.90	
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS US$		1,853,801.73	

It should also be noted that during the period 1968-1976 more capital investments were made. The final audit report gives the figure of US$ 2,382,785.00. We shall come back to these additional expenditures in a later section.

2.2.8. Area Production Studios

In accordance with the basic principle that RVOG should not be the voice of IWF nor broadcast syndicated programs, the major responsibility for program production was vested in the local churches. The program production studios of the churches were therefore indispensible for the operation of RVOG. The establishment of these studios and the engagement of competent staff were also for this reason as urgent and important as the establishment of the radio station itself.

In order to make the best possible use of the expensive broadcasting facilities of RVOG and in order to safeguard the local churches from unnecessary mistakes, a number of precautions and actions were taken.

It was obvious that not just any church could start production of programs in any language and expect that they would be broadcast over RVOG. Certain criteria for establishment of a production studio in a given area were therefore drawn up. Among these criteria, the following were the most important: 1) The technical ability of the station to cover the area with an audible signal should be assured; 2) The size of the linguistic group for which the programs were intended, should be considered; 3) There should be an adequate number of radio receivers to ensure a sizeable audience; 4) The presence of other Christian communication work should be taken into consideration; 5) The proportion of Christians and non-Christians in the area should be taken into account; 6) There should be a reasonable assurance that the local church or churches had the resources to undertake a sustained program production and the ability to minister, using a chosen language. (Esayas 1981:79).

In the fall of 1959, Dr. Aske and Rev'd Allan Thompson made an extensive tour in Africa and met with church leaders as well as missionaries to discuss their possible participation in the radio project. The purpose of these talks was to give them basic information and to explain what

involvement in the RVOC radio ministry would mean to them. In an early document from this time, which apparently was intended to serve as a guideline for the working relationships between RVOC and its program suppliers, the responsibilities and privileges of the two parties were outlined. (LWF Archives).

In January 1960 a "Guide for Initial Planning of a Lutheran Production Studio" had been prepared by RVOC staff and was made available to interested churches. The 35-page document dealt with the basic issues regarding facilities, equipment, program planning and finances.

It should also be recalled that the use of radio in the ministry and mission of the church was not a foreign idea to the churches concerned at this time. It had already been discussed in 1955 at the First All Africa Lutheran Conference at Marangu, as already mentioned in an earlier section. Representatives of churches in both Asia and Africa had also attended the meetings of CWM in 1957 and 1958, when the radio project was extensively discussed. It is therefore not possible to say that the churches were unprepared when the question of programming studios was presented to them in 1960. It is at the same time obvious that the missionaries had a strong influence on the churches when this important matter was discussed. (Esayas 1981:111). We shall later take up this question in its proper context.

The following brief account of the area studios is limited to a few basic facts about their church affiliation, their establishment and development as well as the language group or audience they served. We shall, in this presentation, follow the previously-mentioned division into various categories.[1)]

A. LWF-related Lutheran area studios

1. Ethiopia - Amharic Programming - Yemissrach Dimts Studio in Addis Ababa

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was for obvious reasons the first African church to join in the radio project. It was the RVOC "host church", it had been instrumental

1) The following summary of area studio developments is based mainly on reports given at Studio Directors' Conferences.

in its establishment and it had access to both shortwave and mediumwave broadcasts. It was therefore natural that this church should be engaged in program production from the very beginning.

The question of establishing a local production studio was taken up with the church in early 1960. It was also thoroughly discussed in the Lutheran Missions Committee, which was a forum for the cooperation between those missions in Ethiopia at that time.

After having considered several alternatives, it was finally agreed in February 1961 that the program production for RVOG should be integrated into the already existing cooperative literature program, which EECMY was running together with the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia (LCE). It was decided that the literature program should be expanded into a mass media centre and that a recording studio for radio programs should be established.

The new mass media centre was built in 1961/62 and was given the name "Yemissrach Dints" (Voice of good tidings). A few years later, the United Presbyterian Mission and its related church in Ethiopia also became a partner in the operation of this mass media centre.

The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic and government regulations did not allow the use of vernaculars in public media at that time. Program production was therefore, to begin with, limited to that language. In 1975, when the new regime in the country allowed the use of other languages, production in Oromo and Tigrinya was added, but on a smaller scale.

For a few years the station assisted the church with Amharic program production for mediumwave broadcasts, but in 1968 the local studio assumed full responsibility for this production. English and French programs for domestic broadcasts remained, however, the responsibility of the station.

In 1970 the total population of Ethiopia was estimated at 24 million, of which about 75% understood the official language, Amharic. Some 10 million had Oromo as their mother tongue.

2. Tanzania - Swahili Programming - Sauti ya Injili Studio at Moshi

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) was the second African church to commit itself to regular program production for RVOG. In a letter dated August 12, 1960, the ELCT informed LWF about its decision.

This church already had a small recording studio at the Mwika Bible School on the Kilimanjaro-slopes in northern Tanzania. Swahili radio programs had been produced there since 1958 for broadcasting from Liberia, where the Sudan Interior Mission had its radio station ELWA.

The church was first planning to expand and improve the Mwika studio, which was also done in 1960 with the assistance of LWF. (LWF/BS.B. m.1960:2). It was, however, soon realized that the location was not satisfactory and the facilities were too small. It was therefore decided to build a new studio at Moshi, which was considered a better location and where the ELCT Northern Diocese had its headquarters.

The new studio was ready and officially opened on March 9, 1964 and was named Lutheran Radio Centre Sauti ya Injili, which is a direct translation of "Voice of the Gospel".

Program production for RVOG started in mid-1962 at Mwika and was transferred to Moshi when the new studio building was ready. The Swahili programs, which were beamed from RVOG as of February 1963, were intended not only for Tanzania but for the entire Swahili speaking population in East Africa. It was estimated at that time that there were some 15 million Swahili speaking people in the area. In 1970 it was estimated that more than 35 million people in East and Central Africa understood and spoke this language.

3. South Africa - Zulu, Sesoto, Afrikaans and English Programming - Lutheran Production Studio, Roodepoort

The Lutheran churches and missions in the Union of South Africa had already in 1960 indicated that they were prepared to engage in program production for RVOG. In August 1961 it was reported that these churches, together with the Moravian and the Reinish

Missions, had decided to establish a recording studio. The plan was to remodel an old school-building at Roodepoort in Transvaal near Johannesburg.

In mid-1962, the studio was in operation and broadcasting to South Africa could start as soon as RVOG was officially opened and transmissions began.

The cooperating churches and missions considered it necessary to divide the airtime equally between Zulu, Sesoto, Afrikaans and English, since these languages were all spoken in the area. The program production in these languages was, however, short-lived. By 1968 the studio had to be closed down for financial and other reasons. The size of each language group is not known.

4. Madagascar - Malagasy Programming - Radio Feon'Ny Filanzantsara Studio at Antsirabe

Planning of the Madagascar studio seems to have started just after the Second All Africa Lutheran Conference, which was held at Antsirabe in Madagascar in September 1960. The Malagasy Lutheran Church had apparently been encouraged by this conference and by the reports given about RVOG at that time. In early 1961 the church took the decision to establish a recording studio and Antsirabe was chosen as a suitable location for this studio.

Construction of the studio building started in August the same year. Within one year the studio was in operation and broadcasts to Madagascar were included in the first schedule of RVOG, which began in February 1963.

Since Malagasy is the official language of the island, programs were produced only in this language. When RVOG began French broadcasts to Madagascar in 1966, the programs in this language were produced at the station. The Malagasy speaking poplulation was, in 1970, estimated at 4,75 million.

5. Nigeria - Hausa Programming - Muryar Bishara Studio at Jos

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, which was a member of LWF, was first contacted for possible involvement in program production for RVOG when Dr. Aske and Rev'd Thompson visited the area in the fall of 1959. It should, however, take more than two years before this church was ready to seriously consider the proposal to establish a studio for production of radio programs in the important Hausa language.

One of the problems seems to have been the question of location of the studio. The Lutheran Church in Eastern Nigeria (LCN), which was a Missouri Synod - related church and not a member of LWF, already had a production studio at Obot Idem, in eastern Nigeria. The consideration of a possible cooperation between the two churches seems to have been a delaying factor. (Esayas 1981:110 ff.)

In March 1962, when Dr. Aske visited the area again, a meeting was arranged at Jos in northern Nigeria, to discuss the studio plans with the two parties. Only missionaries attended that meeting. It was, however, found that the best solution would be to have the Hausa production studio at Jos, which was in the Hausa speaking area and where LCCN had its work. This was also formally approved by the LCCN in 1963, when a special studio board was also set up and a Studio Director appointed.

At the annual meeting of the LWF/BS Board in 1964, it was reported that the construction of the studio was almost completed. (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:6). The studio was named "Muryar Bishara" which is a Hausa translation of "Voice of the Gospel".

The radio programs were intended for the entire Hausa speaking population in West Africa, which in 1970 was estimated to be around 40 million.

6. Cameroun - Fulfulde Programming - Santu Linjiila Studio at Ngaoundéré

In May 1962, Dr. Aske wrote to the Field Director of the Norwegian Missionary Society in northern Cameroun, Rev'd H. Endresen, and suggested that if they were interested in making use of the radio station in Addis Ababa, he would be ready to visit the area in November that year for preliminary planning of a production studio. The reply was positive and a consultation was arranged at Ngaoundéré on November 12-13, 1962, when this matter was discussed.

The participating groups were the Norwegian Missionary Society, the American Lutheran Mission and the Lutheran Brethren of USA. These three missions and their related local churches were all engaged in work among the Fulani people in northern Cameroun, Chad and the Central African Republic. This meeting was also attended only by missionaries, but it was agreed that plans for a production studio should be worked out together with the leadership of the churches and that a studio board, with equal representation from local churches and the three mission organizations, should be set up.

It took, however, well over two more years before the studio was built and program production started. One of the reasons for the delay was than an extensive survey of the Fulani population in West Africa had to be done. It had been decided that program production should be in the Fulfulde language and aim at an evangelism outreach to the nomadic tribes which were scattered across the entire West Africa and which belonged to the Fulfulde language group. It was estimated that these tribes numbered between 8 and 10 million and they were all Muslims.

The program production at Ngaoundéré started in early 1966 and regular broadcasting of these programs from RVOG began in November the same year.

B. "Party B" related area studios

1. Lebanon - Arabic Programming - NECC Studio in Beirut and its Feeder Studios in the Middle East

We have already mentioned that the NECC had a well-equipped studio in Beirut, which by the mid-1950's had developed into a radio training centre. This studio was therefore ready to start program production well in advance of the official opening of RVOG.

In order to involve local churches in the area as much as possible, several feeder studios were established. One was located in the Coptic Institute in Cairo and another one in Kuwait. Both were in operation in early 1963. Later on production of program segments started in both Khartoum and in Amman. The Khartoum recording studio became the most important of them. The NECC studio in Beirut also had a close cooperation with the LUTHERAN HOUR, which had a small recording studio in Beirut. This studio also provided daily program segments in Arabic for the NECC broadcasts.

Arabic program production was, from the beginning, considered extremely important, not because it was the main language area of NECC, but because these programs were intended for an audience in the very heart of the Muslim world and for a language group which numbered more than 100 million. For the same reasons, the Arabic broadcasts were given more time than any other language on shortwave, including English and French.

2. Iran - Farsi Programming - NECC Program Centre in Teheran

The Presbyterian Mission in Iran was planning a new literature centre in Teheran at the time when NECC was preparing for participation in the LWF radio project. Since Farsi was the official language of Iran, NECC considered it important that this was made one of its broadcast languages. It was therefore decided that recording facilities should be included in the new mass media centre in Teheran.

Construction of the studio building was completed in 1962 and recording equipment was installed in early 1963. Program production did not start until the following year and in November 1964 the RVOG Farsi broadcasts started.

The population of Iran was in 1970 estimated at 28 million and Farsi was the official language of the country.

5. India - Hindi Programming - CARAVS Studio at Jabalpur

Churches and missions in the Hindi speaking area in northern India had in 1960 formed a mass media organization called the Christian Association for Radio and Audio-Visual Services (CARAVS). This organization had a broad ecumenical constituency and was supported by several overseas agencies.

It started its work in rented facilities in the Theological College at Jabalpur, but in 1963 it could move into a new building, which had been designed for an extensive multi-media program and the headquarters of CARAVS.

Following a visit to India by Dr. Aske and Rev'd Luidens of the NECC, it was suggested that CARAVS should serve as coordinator of non-Lutheran Hindi program production. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962). Some consideration was also given to the possibility that Hindi programs should be produced at the LUTHERAN HOUR studio in Madras.

At its constitutional meeting in January 1963, CCIB considered CARAVS to be a production centre with great capacity and potential. It was therefore suggested that the CARAVS studio should assume the responsibility for Hindi program production and this language should be given high priority in the RVOG broadcast schedule. (CCIB.m.1963:Exhibit D-1). CARAVS had the ambition at that time to build up a production capacity of 2-3 hours daily programming.

In the course of 1963 the studio started production for RVOG, and Hindi programs were included in the broadcast schedule as of September 1964.

The Hindi speaking population in India and neighbouring countries was estimated at some 80 million, and was the second largest language group served by RVOG.

4. India - Telugu Programming - Suvartha Vani Studio at Vijaywada

Church leaders in the Andhra Pradesh State on the east coast of India, met in November 1960 to discuss the use of mass media in their ministry. There was a general consensus that efforts should be made in the way of Christian broadcasting.

A year later, Dr. Aske, together with Dr. Luben and Rev'd Luidens of the NECC, visited Andhra Pradesh to explore the possibilities of establishing a Telugu program production for RVOG. The ground was already prepared for planning of such a production. Following the talks with the RVOG delegation, the Christian Council appointed a broadcasting board, which immediately started with the planning.

A year later, a studio building was under construction at Vijaywada and production of Telugu programs for RVOG was in the planning stage. In late 1963 regular program production started and a year later Telugu was included in the RVOG broadcast schedule.

Telugu is one of the major languages in India and is also spoken in neighbouring countries. It was estimated that the Telugu speaking population was around 40 million.

5. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) - Sinhalese Programming -- Jeevithalokaya Studio in Colombo

When broadcasting over RVOG was considered by the Christian Council in Ceylon, it already had a first-class recording studio and an ongoing program production in both Sinhalese and other languages. Those programs were transmitted from the FEBC station in Manilla. The program production was sponsored by an organization called "Back to the Bible" in the United States.

In 1963 it was suggested that the program production should be expanded and that RVOG should be used as another outlet. Through CCIB, Sinhalese broadcasts were included in the RVOG schedule as of March 1964. At that time it was also reported that RAVEMCCO was partly going to subsidize the program production.

In early 1970 the Sinhalese broadcasts over RVOG were terminated. In 1965 the population of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was estimated at 11 million. The official language was Sinhalese.

6. Malawi - Nyanja Programming - Mema Studio at Lilongwe

At the CCIB meeting in January 1963, the AACC representative, Dr. Donald M'Timkulu, urged the CCIB to give priority to the Nyanja language, which was spoken not only in Malawi but also in neighbouring countries. The Malawi Christian Council, which was officially affiliated to the Christian Council in Nyassaland, already had a recording studio at Lilongwe in the Central Province of Malawi. The studio was considered to have the capacity to undertake regular production of half an hour daily programs in Nyanja, but there was no transmitting facility available which would provide regular airtime.

CCIB recommended that Nyanja programs should be included in the RVOG broadcast schedule, which was also done as of March 1964. The two Christian Councils assumed the responsibility for program production. For various reasons, these broadcasts had to be terminated in early 1967.

C. LUTHERAN HOUR related studios

1. India - Tamil and English Programming - CACS Studio in Madras

The Christian Arts and Communication Service (CACS) was a multi-media communication centre in Madras, sponsored by the LUTHERAN HOUR. This centre had been in operation about ten years at the time when program production for RVOG was first considered. The recording studio was well equipped and had well trained and experienced staff.

The ongoing program production was multi-lingual and both Radio Ceylon and FEBC had been used for transmission of these programs.

During a visit by Dr. Aske in November 1961, the possibility of cooperation with RVOG was discussed. At that time Radio Ceylon had just informed the studio that it could no longer provide airtime and transmissions over that station had to be terminated. The possibility to use RVOG came, therefore, at the right time

for the Madras studio. A general agreement regarding cooperation between the LUTHERAN HOUR and RVOG had also been concluded the year before and what remained were only the practical arrangements.

In the course of 1963 the Madras studio started program production in both Tamil and English for RVOG, and as of 1964 those programs were included in the broadcast schedule. The Tamil speaking population was mainly in South India but there were also large segments of this population in Malaysia and Ceylon. It was estimated that about 60 million people in this area understood and spoke Tamil at that time.

2. Nigeria - English Programming - The Christian Radio Station at Obot Idem, Uyo

The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN), which had resulted from mission work by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, had in 1958 started a small recording studio at Obot Idem in Eastern Nigeria. The program production was in English for transmission from the SIM radio station, ELWA, in Liberia. The studio was affiliated with the Christian Council of Nigeria, but was financed by the LUTHERAN HOUR. There were plans to build a larger studio at Enugu, which was the provincial capital, as soon as possible. This was also done in 1964 and as soon as these facilities were ready, the program production was transferred from Obot Idem to Enugu.

During the civil war in Nigeria in 1969, the Enugu studio had to be abandoned. After a short interruption when RVOG took over the production, temporary recording facilities were arranged at Jos in Northern Nigeria. In the meantime, the Enugu studio had been destroyed and when peace was restored in Eastern Nigeria, the old studio at Obot Idem was re-equipped and program production was resumed in the old facilities.

English programs, produced by this studio, were broadcast from RVOG as of March 1964. They were intended not only for Nigeria but for an English speaking audience in the whole of West Africa.

D. Area studios with direct relationship to RVOG

1. Ethiopia - Amharic Programming - The Ethiopian Orthodox Studio in Addis Ababa

Provision to accommodate Amharic programs, produced by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, in the RVOG broadcast schedule was made from the very beginning. It had also been written into the general agreement with the Ethiopian Government that RVOG should make available upto 30 minutes daily broadcast time, free of charge, to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The official leadership of this church was, however, not interested in making use of this privilege. The Emperor therefore instructed his chaplain at the Palace, who was also head of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Liqe Siltanat Hapte Mariam, to organize a program production unit for RVOG. Under the leadership of this man, the Holy Trinity Cathedral had at that time also started an evangelism outreach program called the Ethiopian Orthodox Mission (EOM) and it was now suggested that EOM should assume the responsibility for production of radio programs in Amharic, which RVOG had offered to broadcast free of charge.

In consultation with RVOG and with the assistance of station staff, EOM remodelled an old residence into a recording studio. Production started in mid-1963 and the programs were transmitted on both shortwave and mediumwave as of March 1964. When government regulations were changed and vernacular broadcasts were allowed in 1975, the studio added both Oromo and Tigrinya languages to the Amharic production.

2. Cameroun - French Programming - FEMEC Studio in Yaounde

Since both English and French were widely spoken in Africa and Asia and since these languages were likely to remain in use for a long time, even after the colonial era had ended, it was considered necessary to include them among the RVOG broadcast languages. "Party B" was also in agreement with this policy. As we have already seen, English program production was undertaken by several area studios. RVOG itself was also preparing for program production in these two languages at the station.

At the CCIB constitutional meeting in January 1963, it was reported that the already existing studio in Yaounde, Cameroun, was in the position to produce French programs for RVOG. (CCIB.m.1963.Exh.D-1). The Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Cameroun (FEMEC)had, since 1956, had a small recording studio for production of French and English programs for the national radio. In 1959 the studio had been improved and two years later, it was decided to build a new studio with more professional equipment.

The new studio was ready in 1962. In the meantime, the national radio had offered $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours free airtime per week to FEMEC at the same time as RVOG was considered a possible outlet.

In 1964, CCIB recommended to RVOG that the FEMEC studio should be offered regular airtime. (CCIB.m.1964:9). The station was at that time preparing for French program production and a team of RVOG staff was the following year sent to West Africa for a survey of program resources. At that time it was considered that a unified program production in French would be the best arrangement, since these broadcasts had to be beamed to several areas. It was therefore agreed that the Yaounde studio should provide regular program segments, which should be integrated into the programs produced at the station.

By this arrangement the FEMEC studio in Yaounde never became a supplier of independent programs, but continued to provide the station with program segments as long as RVOG was in operation. It was nevertheless all the time considered to be one of the RVOG area studios.

In November 1966, RVOG began French broadcasts. The jointly produced programs were from that time on, beamed to various French speaking areas in Africa.

3. China- Mandaring Programming - The Hongkong Studio [1]

The question of assisting the Lutheran churches in the Far East, with an aim to making a contribution to the Christian witness via mass media, was discussed at the CWM meeting in 1964. It was then decided to send a team,which should study the situation and report back at the next meeting.

The report of this team generated a long discussion at the following year's meeting of CWM and it was decided that a concrete proposal should be worked out for consideration at the 1966 CWM meeting. (LWF/BS.B.a.1965).

The Commission approved the proposed plan and referred it to the Broadcasting Service, which at its 1966 annual meeting adopted the plan and approved a budget for this new undertaking. (LWF/BS.B.m.1966:4).

The approved plans implied that mass media centres should be established in both Tokyo and Hongkong and that these should operate as units under the LWF/BS Board. The two Directors should be answerable to the LWF/BS General Director. This meant that the LWF Broadcasting Service had expanded beyond RVOG and was moving towards a global operation.

At the same meeting, the LWF/BS Board authorized a study of the possibility to start broadcasting to China. (LWF/BS.B.m.1966:5). The findings were considered positive and already the following year the Hongkong Office started program production in Mandarin. Regular broadcasts to China started in mid-1968 and continued until 1975, when they were terminated.

In addition to the above-listed area studios, the station itself also produced programs for both shortwave and mediumwave broadcasting. This program production was mainly in English and French. Daily news bulletins in several languages were also produced at the station.

1) The Hongkong Office was administered directly under LWF/BS between 1966-1977 and the Tokyo Office between 1966-1979. After that cooperating local churches organized their own inter-church communication structures.

It should also be mentioned that some of the studio projects which were under way in 1962 and 1963 never became operational. This was the case with the Indonesia studio, which was in the planning stage in 1962, and also the Jerusalem studio which was built in 1963 but, for political reasons, was never used. The latter was sponsored by the LUTHERAN HOUR and intended for program production in both Arabic and Hebrew.

The extensive network of area studios which developed in the early 1960's provided for the local church involvement and the cultural relevence, which were two original principles of RVOG. It can, however, not be denied that the initiatives to establish those area studios were in most cases taken by foreign missions and that the initial leadership of the studios consisted to a large extent of missionaries.

The fact that radio was a new and largely unknown technology and the lack of local personnel trained in this field,made it necessary to engage available expatriate expertise in the initial period. The development of the studios shows, however, that efforts were made to replace these expatriates with trained nationals as soon as it was possible.

In spite of these efforts, the area studios remained, in most cases, isolated units with a closer relationship to the station than to their own churches. This problem was given special attention when the new Department of Audience Research and Planning was established at RVOG in 1970. Through church-media consultations and special seminars, a new media awareness began to grow in the local churches which was particularly reflected in the planning of the new radio ministry after the nationalization of RVOG.

At the year end of 1962, the implementation period of RVOG was also approaching its end. The inauguration of the station should take place on February 26th, 1963 and prior to that the station had to be operational and a sufficient supply of programs had to be on the RVOG shelves.

RVOG Area Studios - Basic Data

Category	Country	Place	Name of studio	Language	Size of language group (1970)	Operational period
A. 1.	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Yemissrach Dimts	Amharic	About 18 million	1963 - 1977
A. 2.	Tanzania	Moshi	Sauti ya Injila	Swahili	About 35 million	1963 - 1977
A. 3.	S. Africa	Roodepoort	Luth.Prod.Studio	Zulu, Sesoto and English	------	1963 - 1968
A. 4.	Madagascar	Antsirabe	Radio Feon'Ny Filazantsara	Malagasy	About 4,75 million	1963 - 1977
A. 5.	Nigeria	Jos	Muryar Bishara	Hausa	About 40 million	1965 - 1977
A. 6.	Cameroun	Ngaoundéré	Sawtu Linjiila	Fulfulde	8-10 million	1966 - 1977
B. 1.	Lebanon	Beirut	NECC Studio	Arabic	Over 100 million	1963 - 1977
B. 2.	Iran	Teheran	NECC Programming Centre, Iran	Farsi	About 28 million	1964 - 1977
B. 3.	India	Jabalpur	CARAVS Studio	Hindi	80 million (1965)	1964 - 1974
B. 4.	India	Vijayawada	Suvartha Vani	Telugu	40 million (1965)	1964 - 1977
B. 5.	Sri Lanka	Colombo	Jeevithalokaya	Sinhalese	11 million (1965)	1964 - 1970
B. 6.	Malawi	Lilongwe	Mema Studio	Nyanja	------	1964 - 1967
C. 1.	India	Madras	CACS Studio	Tamil	60 million (1965)	1964 - 1977
C. 2.	Nigeria	Uyo/Enugu	Christian Radio Studio	English	------	1963 - 1977
D. 1.	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	EOM Studio	Amharic	(See above A.1.)	1964 - 1977
D. 2.	Cameroun	Yaounde	FFMEC Studio	French	------	1966 - 1977
D. 3.	China	Hongkong	LWF/BS Studio	Mandarin	------	1968 - 1975

Note 1. Only the main language of program production is listed
Note 2. 1970 demographic figures are taken from UN World Statistics
Note 3. Operational period includes commencing and closing year, even when the studio operated only part of the year.

2.3. The Operational Stage (1963-1977)

At the same time as the ambition was to make RVOG a modern broadcasting station with a technical outfit dimensioned for the future, it was also realized that the operational period of this radio station might not be more than a decade or so. Apart from the fact that broadcasting equipment would need to be replaced by that time, it was assumed that technical and political developments in the service areas would, within that period, call for a review of the entire project.

When the RVOG operation was suddenly terminated after 14 years of uninterrupted service, there was not time for reasoning and no place for arguments. A military order put an end to all activities within less than an hour. This action also closed the chapter on the institutional operation of RVOG.

In the previous sections we have followed developments during the planning and implementation stages of the radio project. We have seen how circumstances moulded it and how it took more time and required more investment than originally expected to make it a proper broadcasting institution. We shall now look at developments during the operational period. We shall again see how the project turned out to be more complex and more expensive than anticipated, but also how accomplishments and results surpassed expectations.

2.3.1. RVOG - Station ETLF

It took almost exactly two years from the date at which the agreement with the Ethiopian Government was signed, until the broadcasting institution was completed and the technical outfit was installed and operational. The 26th of February, 1963 had been set at the inauguration date already a year in advance. (LWF/BS.B.m.1962:6). Approaching that date, the working tempo became more and more "feverish" and, in the words of the Director, "there was expectation and suspense in the air as the modern metaphor was taxing up to the starting line." (Aske, report 1963:23).

Parallel to other planning and preparation, the station was given its international identification code, its name and its motto prior to the inauguration ceremony. The Imperial Board of Telecommunication in

Ethiopia (IBTE) had decided that the identification "call letters" of this radio station should be ETLF, which stood for Ethiopia (ET) and Lutheran Federation (LF). In accordance with the agreement signed with the Ethiopian Government, those "call letters" were to be used in all transmission announcements. (Article IV).

The name of the station had been discussed on several occasions during the planning and implementation period. In 1959, "Voice of the Gospel" had already been suggested by the CWM Chairman, Bishop Heinrich Meyer, but no decision had been taken. When negotiations with the Ethiopian Government began the following year, one of the first questions put to Dr. Aske was: "What is the name of the radio station?" It was apparent that this was of considerable concern to the Government and perhaps more so to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Aske realized that this was not the time to say: "I don't know." On the basis of previous talks in Geneva, his answer was: "Voice of the Gospel", hoping that this would be approved by LWF. (Aske, report March 1960).

The formal decision on the name was taken two years later by the Radio Executive Committee. At that time the name,which had been mentioned,was already registered in Ethiopia as the official name of the station. In the meantime, NECC had expressed some hesitation to use "Voice of the Gospel" as the identification of the station in broadcasts to certain areas. It was therefore decided:"That the use of the call letters ETLF be approved and that it be subject to the discretion of the Director, when Voice of the Gospel be appended". (LWF/BS.EC.m. 1962:6).

When the station went into operation a year later, the name "RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL" was soon made the regular identification and the international call letters ETLF were appended to it. All transmissions were introduced by a sound of drum-beating followed by the announcement: "This is Radio Voice of the Gospel, station ETLF, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia".

In his report to the annual meeting of the LWF/BS Board 1962, Aske had suggested that an inauguration plaque, with a motto inscribed on it, should be placed on the front wall of the station. The motto he suggested was "Proclaiming the Gospel to Africa and Asia". He emphasized

that this was not for decoration purposes, but to underline the primary objective of the station. At the same time, he also stressed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ should not be interpreted in a narrow sense - it had to do with all aspects of life. A number of other suggestions for a corner stone motto were considered by the Board at the same meeting, such as "Proclaiming the Gospel to All Nations"; "Faith Cometh by Hearing" and "Christ's Gospel to His World". The final choice was PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD. This inscription was then made on a brass plate and fixed on the wall at the main entrance of the station. (LWF/BS.B. m.1962:6).

The inauguration ceremony on February 26, 1963 was a solemn event when His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, with government and church dignitaries, honoured the occasion with their presence. The Lutheran World Federation was represented by its President, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry and other high officials. The Broadcasting Service was represented by its Chairman, Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz and the leadership of the station. "Party B" and the LUTHERAN HOUR were also represented as well as churches and missions in the country.

The opening speech was given by H.E. Ato Emmanuel Abraham, who had recently taken over the Ministry of Telecommunication. Following that, the Emperor delivered an inauguration address. He began by saying: "This radio station, which today is inaugurated in Our presence, is surely devoted to one of the noblest endeavours - the sharing with all who are reached, the Word of the Allmighty God". He continued by expressing his confidence that the station should not be used for "narrow sectarian teaching or belittling of other faiths" and he concluded by saying: "It is fitting that this radio station should find its place in Ethiopia - the island of Christianity in this part of the world".

Dr. Aske responded and assured the Emperor and all present that RVOG was established to serve the Christian churches, irrespective of denomination and nationality.

The main inauguration speech was given by the President of LWF, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry. He had apparently the hesitation about the name VOICE OF THE GOSPEL in mind when he said: "The kind of Gospel that will be sent over the air waves from this place, we can assure you, will never be designed to anything narrow. It will always be wide, equal to the interests of the Lord of the universe Himself, and of the One Who lived so fully in this world that nothing human will ever again be alien to him. Whatever is of benefit to human beings, to their standard of life, their health, to their advancement, to add to their education, to enrich their personalities as well as to open their ears to the best news of all - of peace with God - will legitimately be within the scope and concern of the programs that will be beamed from here. All that is debarred is everything that is intended to exploit or agitate or tear down. The best assurance is that all be in the spirit of the Son of Man".

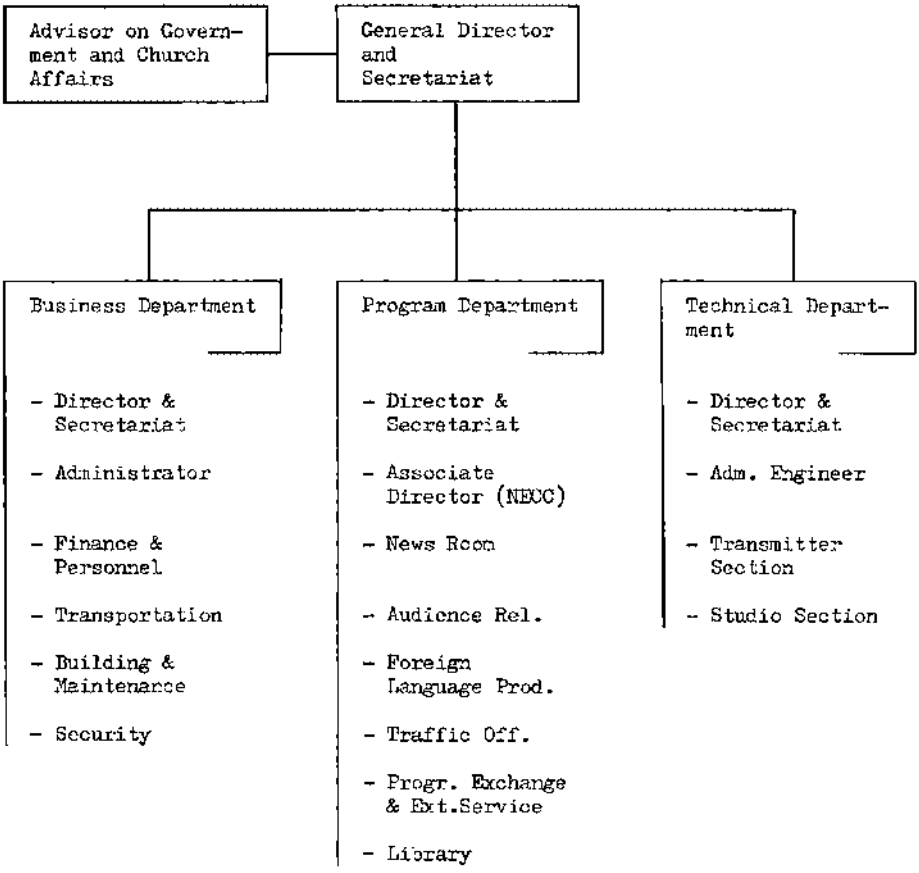
The transmitter was then switched on and the air waves began to carry the message to its destinations. RVOG was no longer "taxing up to the starting line" - it had "taken off". Its direction had been given and its objectives set. The inauguration speeches had confirmed them. RVOG was there to serve in the mission of the Church - not with a sectarian approach or a narrow interpretation, but as the VOICE OF THE GOSPEL - PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD.

2.3.2. Administration

It has already been mentioned that the question of where the radio project should belong in the overall structure of LWF and what status it should have, had been resolved in 1960/61. In line with that decision, RVOG gradually became an administrative unit of its own. This had also been the intention of CWM all the time, as can be seen from the minutes. (LWF/CWM.m.1958:17).

In early 1960, offices had been rented in the Ethiopian capital and an administrative staff had gradually been built up. As of January 1961 the financial administration of the project had been transferred from Geneva to Addis Ababa and in the course of 1961, three departments began to function. At the time when RVOG went into operation the staff had grown to 70, of which 20 were expatriates.

The following diagram shows the initial administrative structure of RVOC:



Structural changes were made from time to time and there was also a gradual expansion of all departments as the scope of the operation was growing.

The General Director's Office

The LWF Broadcasting Service had been set up to run the radio project. To begin with no other projects or activities within this structure were foreseen. The General Director's Office was therefore located at the radio station and he was also the RVOG Director.

When the Broadcasting Service a few years later began to expand into other activities elsewhere in the world, the administrative structure had to be adjusted. In order to allow the LWF/BS to expand into a global operation without affecting the RVOG administration, it was decided to make a distinction between the General Director's Office and the office of the RVOG Station Director. This took effect in February 1967. In May the same year the General Director's Office was moved to Geneva. (LWF/BS.B.m. 1966:4-5).

The Station Administration Unit

At the same time as the General Director's Office was moved to Geneva, the Business Department of RVOG was integrated into the Station Director's Office. This arrangement, which was made with the good intention of rationalizing and making financial savings, resulted, however, in a situation where the leadership of RVOG was unable to satisfactorily cope with essential policy matters, long-range planning and promotion as well as studio and church relations. Opportunities and problems which RVOG was facing at this time could certainly have been handled in a better way had the Business Department been maintained and the Station Director thereby been given sufficient time to attend to those questions. Political tensions, financial problems and personnel shortages also added to the work load of the station administration.

After six years, while the whole LWF structure had been reviewed and a special "Task Force on Mass Communication" had drawn up the directions for long-range planning, the LWF/BS Executive Committee appointed a "Sub-Committee on Administration Personnel". This committee was asked to review job descriptions, relationships and the RVOG administrative structure. The outcome of this review was a recommendation to the effect that the Board should delegate more responsibility to the Station Director and that an Associate Station Director with experience in the field of radio broadcasting should be appointed. It was further recommended that a

Management Committee should be set up to serve as an advisory group both to the station leadership and the Board. At its meeting in April 1974, the Board acted in favour of these recommendations. At the same meeting it was also resolved to re-establish the Department of Administration, which had been desolved in 1967. (LWF/BS.B.m.1974:14-15).

The administration unit of RVOG, including the Station Director's Office, was responsible for government and church relations, personnel and finances as well as station security and supplies. The daily broadcasting operation was to begin with handled by only two departments, namely technical and program. Later on the responsibilities of the Program Department were divided and two more departments were established.

The Technical Department

Both structurally and functionally the Technical Department was the most stable of the RVOG administrative units. It had a clear cut area of responsibility. The low turn-over of staff gave the Department a unique stability. Through systematic on-the-job training at all levels a high professional standard was achieved. It was due to these qualities of the Department that RVOG could maintain its technical performance even in the last years, in spite of outdated and worn-out equipment.

The work within the Department was divided into three sections. All matters related to broadcast schedules, frequences and monitoring were handled by the Administrative Engineering Section. Operation and maintenance of the transmitter station at Gedja were responsibilities of the Transmitter Section. The third section was basically a service unit for recording and other equipment at the station.

The Program Department

This unit had a very wide area of responsibility. It was the Program Department which should see to it that the daily broadcast time to each target area was filled with programs of a standard commensurate with adopted policies and professional requirements.

In line with the "Geneva Agreement" it was first suggested that "Party A and B" should have separate program departments. (LWF/CWM.a.1960 Exh.C). It was, however, soon found that this arrangement would not work well.

The program administration was therefore made one unit. The NECC Executive Officer at the station was now given a double function. He was named Associate Program Director and Coordinator of Broadcast Affiliates. This arrangement also had its problems with a split responsibility. Two years after the opening of the station the NECC Office at RVOG was closed down. (LWF/BS.B.a.1966:8). After that time, the RVOG Program Department dealt directly with all program suppliers as far as program administration was concerned. In contrast to the Technical Department, the Program Department had a high turn-over of staff. This had to do with the nature of this operation. It was the policy of RVOG to have active professional broadcasters and journalists in all programming activities and in the news service. Continuity was therefore considered less important than proficiency.

The Department of Audience Research and Planning (DARP)

Integration of the Business Department into the Station Director's Office in 1967 and the expansion of the administrative responsibilities of the Program Department made the RVOG operation more and more introverted and station-centered. The churches and their production studios as well as the whole area of audience research and relations were not given the attention and assistance they needed.

With a view to resolving this problem, it was suggested in November 1969 that a special department for research and extension services be set up. This was approved by the LWF/BS Executive Committee a month later. (LWF/BS.EC.m.1969:1).

Following that decision, the Department of Audience Research and Planning was established in mid-1970. The new department assumed responsibility for research, training of radio workers and audience relations. To delineate the general objectives of the two departments concerned, it was said that DARP should be "people-oriented" while the Program Department should continue to be "program-oriented". (LWF/BS.B.m.1971:15).

The News Department

In 1975 the RVOG news service was also made a department of its own. This question had been discussed for a long time and it was felt that the magnitude as well as the nature of the news operation warranted an independent administration.

With these structural changes, the RVOG administration had become more manageable and the areas of responsibility were more equally distributed between the administrative units.

The RVOG Cabinet

In the internal administration of the station, the RVOG Cabinet played an important role. It was a forum for inter-departmental consultations and consisted of the Station Director, his associate and the department heads. This group met regularly throughout the whole operation period of RVOG. It had only an advisory and coordinating function but no important decisions were taken before the Cabinet had been heard. The recorded minutes from these meetings were circulated among Office and Section Heads and served as a channel for internal information.

The LWF Broadcasting Service

It was in preparation for the Fifth General Assembly of LWF, which was held at Evian, France, in 1970, that the question of an overall review of the LWF structure was raised. At the same time, the earlier mentioned Task Force on Mass Communication was appointed by the LWF Executive Committee. The assignment of the Task Force also included evaluation of the LWF/BS organizational structure. (LWF.EC.m.December 1969).

At the first annual meeting of the LWF/BS Board after the Evian Assembly it was reported that the Broadcasting Service should continue more or less as previously, pending the findings of the Task Force. (LWF/BS.B.a. Director's report 1971:4).

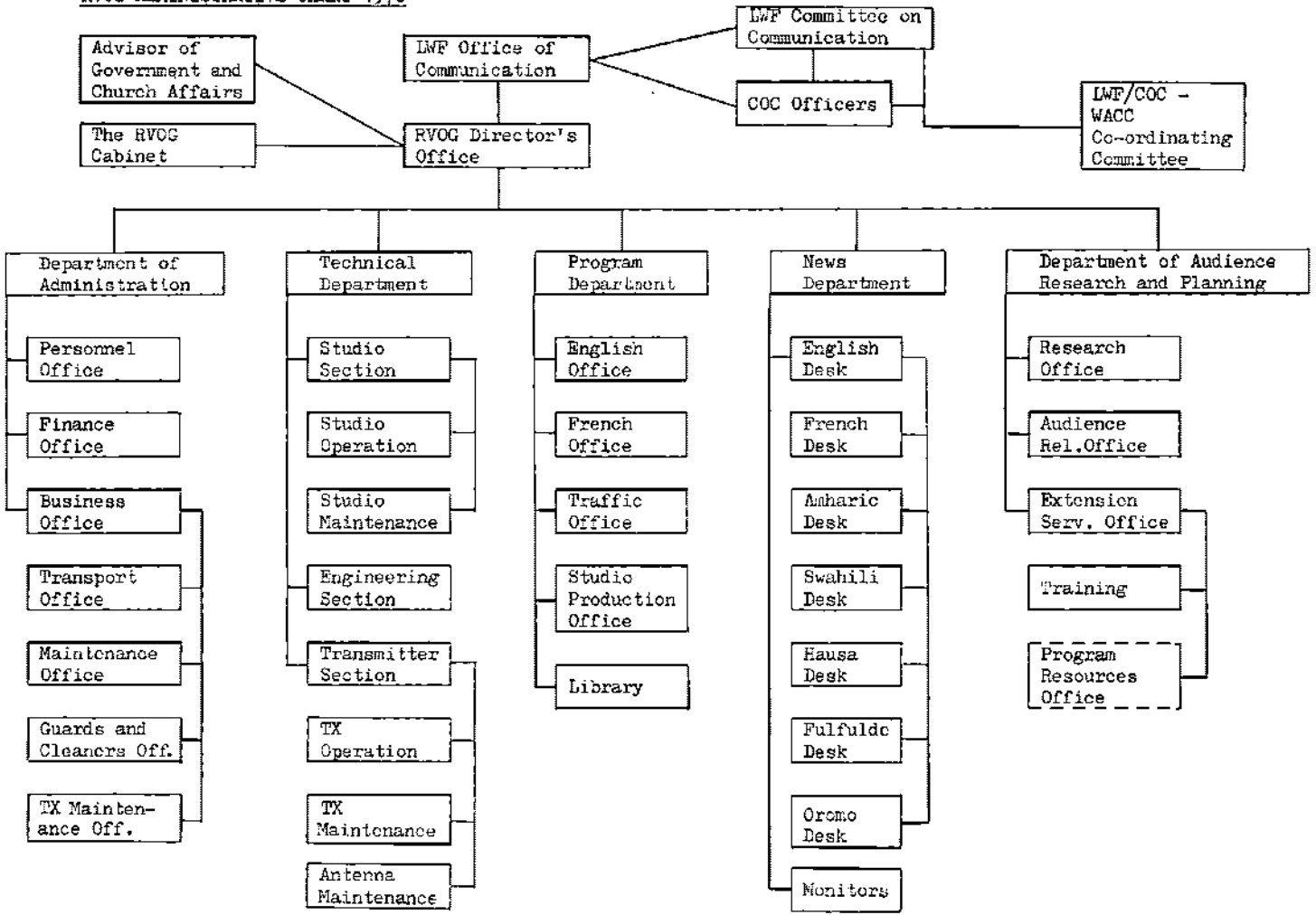
In 1974 the LWF/BS Board and the Committee on Information Services jointly suggested that the possibility of merger of the two bodies should be studied. This resulted in a proposal to establish an Office of Communication within the General Secretariate. This proposal was approved by the LWF Executive Committee at its meeting in Amsterdam in August 1975.

By this action all communication ministries of LWF had been brought together in one administrative unit and the RVOG project had been taken out of CWM and placed in the General Secretariate. The LWF/BS Board was replaced by a Committee on Communication. This was the first step towards the establishment of a Commission on Communication with its own department, which was done in July 1980. At that time the RVOG broadcasting institution was no

longer in the picture but the RVOG radio ministry continued to be a major concern of the new Commission. At the same time as these structural revisions took place within LWF, the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) went through a similar re-organization. The old question of structural relationships between "Party A and B" had been discussed on several occasions in the process of the above described deliberations. In 1972 it had already been suggested that a governing board with voting membership of WACC should be considered. (LWF.EC.a.1972:Exhibit E.2).

In 1973 a permanent WACC-LWF/BS Coordinating Committee was established, a new "Statement of Relationships" was adopted and the distinction between Party A and B was "honourably retired". (LWF/BS.B.m.1974:Exhibit F.2).

RVOG ADMINISTRATIVE CHART 1976



2.3.3. Personnel

Radio broadcasting, like many other activities, is always a team-work which requires specialized workers in a number of fields. Professional broadcasters alone cannot do much without technical expertise and administrators are just as indispensible as the journalists and script writers are. If the team is deficient or the team spirit is poor, the whole operation is suffering. Recruitment and personnel administration are therefore among the most vital areas at a broadcasting station.

RVOG was no exception. The fact that it was a Christian radio station did not make this aspect of the operation less complex and demanding. The fact that RVOG not only was a Christian radio station, but a trans-national, inter-cultural and multi-lingual operation, added to the complexity of the personnel administration.

There were basically two problem areas which need to be mentioned here. One is recruitment, or the problem of finding the right people for given positions. The other is remuneration, or the problem of justice and equality with regard to employment conditions and benefits.

Recruitment

RVOG never developed a system for recruitment or a check-list for screening of candidates, nor was there a fixed procedure for recruitment. It can rightly be said that this was a weakness but it also provided for a practical flexibility and made it possible for the leadership to "hand-pick" people for given positions. In most cases this proved to be not only an advantage, but the only way of filling vacancies. This is not to say that recruitment of staff for RVOG was without problems.

For executive staff positions, job descriptions as well as appointments were always subject to Board approval. All other employment matters were handled by the station leadership. At the first annual meeting of the LWF/BS Board it was said that in building up staff for the radio station, three principles were to be established: 1) Qualifications should have first priority; 2) Balance of nationalities was important; 3) Engagement and training of local staff was essential. (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:4). Qualifications were always understood to include both professional and personal abilities and it is certainly fair to say that these were considered of equal importance.

Christian radio stations have often been accused of being more concerned with personal Christian commitment than with professional proficiency, which has resulted in a general low professional standard. (Kushner, 1976:148). RVOG was aware of this danger and struggled to keep a balance between the two. At the 1964 annual meeting of the LWF/BS Board, the RVOG Director expressed concern about how to get "motivated, mature and qualified staff". (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:4). In his report to the Commission on World Mission the same year, Aske mentioned the tension which had developed between "radio experts and church professionals". (LWF/CWM.a.1964:1). Commenting on this problem, Ferdinand Baglo writes: "This is to be a permanent feature but can be a wholesome situation. There is a concern over the fact that some staff members frequently show more technical competence than Christian concern, while others demonstrate more evangelical zeal than awareness of communication science." (Baglo, 1972:110). At the 1969 annual meeting of the Board this issue was again discussed and it was pointed out that there was "an enstrangement between radio professionals and missionaries ". It was at this time suggested that more professionals should be engaged at the station. The RVOG leadership and the Board, however, took the line that this tension was fruitful and should be allowed to stay. Aske pointed out that it was created by a dual emphasis on genuine church participation and a professional standard of broadcasting.

It was here that the flexibility in personnel recruitment gave RVOG a unique reputation among the so-called "missionary radio stations". The RVOG leadership had the courage to engage radio professionals and missionaries as it was considered needed and took the pain of tension in daily work in order to achieve the dual objective of genuine church participation and professional standard.

In comparative studies on Christian radio stations, this unique policy of RVOG has been noticed. James Kushner says: "RVOG alone among the African religious stations hires non-affiliated broadcast professionals on contract". He also makes the following remark: "RVOG retains its top policy positions for Lutheran missionaries but as a rule would prefer qualified broadcast professionals at all operational levels." (Kushner, 1976:151-152). The BBC reporter and former RVOG staff member, Reginald Kennedy, says: "RVOG was the only station which employed professional

radio staff to work alongside missionaries". (Kennedy, 1981:55). He also points out that when the tension within staff had a positive effect, it gave birth to good programs, but when the effect was negative, it created dissent and polarized opinion among staff. (Kennedy, 1981:56).

At the same time as RVOG was anxious to maintain its Christian character and achieve its missionary objective by keeping a balance between missionaries and radio professionals, there was no discrimination as to church affiliation or confessional denomination. Kushner's statement about policy positions at RVOG being held by Lutheran missionaries is only true for the RVOG Director's position. Other top positions were frequently held by people with different church affiliations. At no time was a certain church membership made a requirement for appointment to any of those positions, but there was always a quest into the Christian commitment of those under consideration for employment. Expatriate staff members were in most cases recruited from Protestant churches of various denominations, while the majority of local employees were members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The balance of nationalities was another principle which had to be taken into consideration. This principle was clearly of less importance than personal and professional qualifications, but it was nevertheless to be given due consideration. It had first of all to do with the image of the station. This was discussed in January 1962, when the following was voted: "In recruitment of personnel the international character of the station should be kept in mind. This will mean that to the extent professionally trained people are available, the continents of Africa and Asia will have their own representatives on the staff in addition to Ethiopians and Europeans". (LWF/BS.EC.m.1962:2). The concern to secure African and Asian personnel at the station as soon as possible had already been expressed in 1958 when it was stated: "Constant efforts should be made to secure African and Asian personnel". (Memorandum to the LWF Executive Committee of October 16, 1958). This was repeatedly stated in the following years.

Robert Van Deusen, in his book on RVOG, makes the following remark about this principle: "The church leaders,who planned the project,wanted to avoid even the appearance of "cultural imperialism", which might be inferred from a staff in which people from the United States and Europe held most of the important positions. The real reason, however, for wanting to move in the direction of staffing with nationals was not to avoid criticism,

but to participate in a genuine and perceptive way in the culture of the two developing continents." (Van Deusen 1968:519).

The balance of nationalities had also to do with the multi-national support of the station and its multi-lingual services. Representation on the RVOG staff from a given country or church always meant an additional stimulation in the financial support of the station. As to the multi-lingual services, it was essential to have natives of a given language voice news bulletins and programs. For these reasons the RVOG staff was always multi-national. At times there were as many as twenty different nationalities on the staff at the same time.

The third principle for recruitment had to do with local, i.e. Ethiopian, staff. There were many reasons for recruitment of local staff. No travel from far away countries was involved. There was no need for housing and the language was not a problem. Through consistant efforts to engage qualified local staff and through systematic training, this principle was most successfully carried through.

The following tables illustrate staff developments at RVOG and indicate how the above-mentioned principles are reflected in the development of staffing over the years.

Table 1 - Expatriate staff by profession

(When a person had a double competence, the field in which he/she had the longest experience has been chosen).

Year	Theologians/ Missionaries	Broadcast Professionals & Journalists	Technical Personnel	Administrative staff	Total
1963	2	9	8	6	25
1967	5	14	7	7	33
1970	5	15	5	5	30
1973	4	22	3	4	33
1976	1	17	2	2	22

Table 2 - All staff by geographical areas

Year	Europe/USA	Africa/Asia	Ethiopia		Total
			Skilled Staff	Unskilled Staff	
1963	23	2	47	28	100
1967	29	4	52	85	170
1970	24	6	81	76	187
1973	26	7	97	73	203
1976	15	7	96	94	212

Table 3 - Office and Section Heads/Supervisors by geographical areas

Office and Section Heads/Supervisors

Year	Europe/USA	Africa/Asia incl. Ethiopia	Total
1963	10	13	23
1967	14	17	31
1970	16	23	39
1973	14	27	41
1976	7	27	34

Table 4 - Station leadership by country and period of service

Name	Profession	Country	Period of Service
a) RVOG Directors:			
Aske, Sigurd Ph.D.	Missionary	Norway	1959-1967
Volz, Paul, Rev.	Missionary	USA	1967-1970
Bauerochse,Ernst,Rev.	Missionary	Germany	1970-1974
Lundgren,Manfred,Rev.	Missionary	Sweden	1974-1977
b) Directors of Adm.:			
Månson, Thorsten, Mr.	Missionary	Sweden	1961-1967
Newell, Arthur, Mr.	Business Consult.	USA	1974-1975
Irenna, Yohannes, Mr.	Business Adm.	Ethiopia	1975-1977
c) Technical Directors:			
Kraemer, Erich, Mr.	Engineer	USA	1960-1967
Gobana, Kebede, Mr.	Engineer	Ethiopia	1967-1977
d) Program Directors:			
Fick, Ulrich, Rev.	Prof.Broadcaster	Germany	1961-1967
Ofstad, Jon Egil,Rev.	Missionary	Norway	1967-1971
Badejo, Victor, Rev.	Prof.Broadcaster	Nigeria	1972-1975
Joergensen, Knud,Rev.	Prof.Broadcaster	Denmark	1975-1977
e) Chief News Editors:			
Stewart, Kenneth, Mr.	Prof.Journalist	England	1963-1974
Pain, Hugh, Mr.	Prof.Journalist	England	1974-1976
Becher, Peter, Mr.	Prof.Journalist	Germany	1976-1977
f) Director DARP:			
Esayas, Menkir, Mr.	Prof.Broadcaster	Ethiopia	1970-1977

Remuneration

There were a number of factors which made this question a permanent and difficult problem at RVOG. The project was originally and basically a missionary enterprise and, as such, the staff was expected to make some sacrifices in the material standard. At the same time, in order to secure qualified professional people, a reasonable remuneration had to be offered. There was the risk that if the employment conditions were too poor, the qualified and experienced personnel needed would turn down the offer and the result would be that RVOG only got second-class broadcast professionals. To have different salary-scales for different categories of expatriate staff would also create an unhealthy situation at the station.

The problem was even more complicated with regard to local staff. To uphold the principle of equality - same salary for the same job - and at the same time keep to government and local church regulations was impossible.

In an attempt to resolve these problems, a salary structure was prepared which divided staff into three categories:
A-staff included all local employees with skills and competence to hold technical, secretarial or supervisory positions.
B-staff consisted of "unskilled" local staff such as guards, gardeners, maintenance workers and cleaners.
For these two categories a salary-scale based on government regulations and employment practices was worked out including social security and pension benefits.
C-staff included all expatriate personnel. For this category the employment benefits were less than for similar positions in the industrial countries, but better than most missionary organizations offered to their personnel. In addition to cash salary, contract staff from abroad had free housing, free schooling for their children, full medical insurance and home leave between each term of service, which was normally three years. This was not an ideal solution, but the best possible at that time. It was, however, unavoidable that the difference in the employment conditions should lead to discontent and justified demands for adjustments.

Salaries for local employees were reviewed and augmented each year by a cost-of-living allowance, which expatriate staff got only occasionally. Attempts to balance off the most obvious injustices within the establishment system by salary adjustments, resulted in more than a tripling of personnel

costs during the first ten years. In spite of those efforts, the differences remained and it became more and more clear that the whole system had to be replaced.

When Rev'd. Ernst Bauerochse was appointed RVOG Director in 1970, one of the first things he did was to initiate a comprehensive review of employment conditions for all staff. After a preliminary study of the situation, he raised the issue in his annual report 1971 and pointed out that the old system could no longer be maintained. He suggested that a "unified employment contract" should be worked out and a new salary structure be drawn up, which should apply to all staff. (LWF/BS.B.a.1972). In a special memorandum on a study of the 1971 cost-of-living index he said: "We recommend a re-evaluation of all salaries and especially for the so-called B-staff (below E.$ 150), who feel the cost-of-living most and who should receive special consideration in view of the rising prices for food and other commodities." (LWF/BS.B.a.1972:Exhibit A.3).

At the LWF/BS Executive Committee meeting in November 1973, Bauerochse presented a proposal for a unified employment contract and reported that a new salary structure was under study. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1973:Exh.III). A few months later the Ethiopian revolution started and signals from the new authorities indicated that the whole social system in the country was going to be changed. In the following year, the RVOG Labour Union was formed and negotiations of a collective agreement took over the work which the station leadership had initiated three years before the revolution began.

Parallel to these negotiations the London-based Price Waterhouse Associates which for some years had served as the RVOG auditors, were asked to work out a new salary structure based on the new labour law in the country, which had been promulgated in July 1975.

Their proposal was ready in November 1976. At the same time a draft collective agreement was also ready, worked out by the RVOG Labour Union and the station administration. These two documents were to be presented to the LWF/BS Board for approval in March 1977. Just prior to that meeting the station was nationalized and all Ethiopian employees were made civil servants of the new government. All expatriates had to leave the country. The question of how the RVOG financial obligations to its staff were settled shall be taken up in a later section.

2.3.4. Broadcasting

There were two factors which determined the scope and performance of the broadcasting station. One was the demand and need for regular broadcasts and the capacity to produce programs. The other was the technical capacity of the station. The following tables indicate how the station was used - for what kind of broadcasts and how its technical performance was.

Table 1 - Short-wave broadcasting by language and time per day

(The figures indicate minutes of daily transmissions)

Language	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Amharic	30'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	100'	60'
Arabic+)	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'	180'
Farsi +)		30'	30'	30'	30'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'
Fulfulde				30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'
Hausa			30'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'
Hindi		30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	40'	40'	30'	30'
Malagasy	30'	45'	40'	40'	65'	65'	75'	70'	70'	75'	75'	75'	75'	75'
Mandarin						30'	30'	60'	60'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'
Nyanja		30'	30'	30'	30'									
Oromo														45'
S.Africa+)	60'	60'	45'	45'	45'	45'								
Sinhalese		30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'						
Swahili	60'	45'	45'	45'	55'	55'	65'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	75'	75'
Tamil		30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	40'	40'	40'
Telugu		30'	30'	40'	40'	40'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'	45'
English	75'	60'	60'	105'	105'	105'	120'	135'	135'	155'	140'	110'	105'	105'
French				45'	45'	90'	150'	135'	135'	120'	120'	120'	120'	120'

Table 2 - Medium-wave broadcasting by language and time per day

(The figures indicate minutes. It should also be noted that the table also includes the news service on MW).

Language and type of progr.	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Amharic progr.	75'	80'	115'	115'	120'	120'	120'	120'	130'	130'	130'	130'	75'
Oromo progr.													30'
English progr.	15'	35'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	60'	90'	90'	90'	90'
French progr.					25'	25'	25'	25'	25'	30'	30'	30'	30'
Amharic news	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'	25'	25'	25'	25'	25'	25'
Oromo news													10'
English news	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'
French news		10'	15'	15'	15'	15'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'	30'
Music progr.	65'	80'	90'	90'	120'	120'	120'	120'	120'	75'	75'	75'	75'
Number of languages broadcast	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Hours per day	3	4	5	5	6	6½	6½	6½	6½	6½	6½	6½	6½

Table 3 - Short-wave news service by language and number of bulletins per day

(Bulletins were usually of 8-10 minutes duration and followed by a 5-minute topic)

Language	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Amharic	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Arabic		1	1											
Fulfulde									1	1	1	1	1	1
Hausa						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hindi					1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Oromo												1		1
Swahili	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
English	3	4	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8
French				4	4	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
Number of languages	3	4	4	4	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	6	7
Number of newscasts per day	5	7	10	13	14	16	16	16	19	20	19	19	18	19

Table 4 - Technical operations and errors by year

(The errors here were due to the human factor)

Year	Total operations		Number of errors	
	Daily	Yearly	per year	
1966	177	64.605	405	0.0062%
1967	177	64.605	290	0.0044%
1968	214	78.110	403	0.0051%
1969	220	80.300	274	0.0034%
1970	236	86.140	342	0.0040%
1971	245	89.425	316	0.0035%
1972	256	93.440	264	0.0030%
1973	236	86.140	190	0.0022%
1974	220	80.300	124	0.0015%
1975	206	75.190	114	0.0015%
1976	196	71.540	118	0.0016%

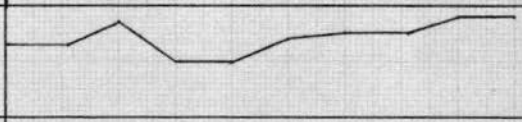
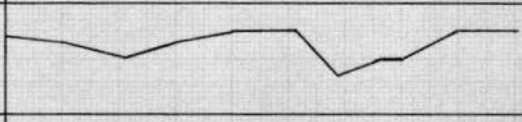
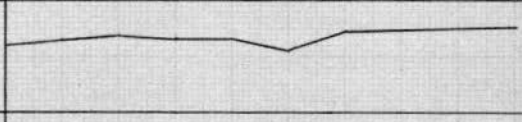
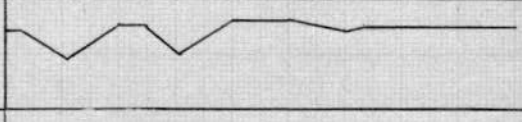
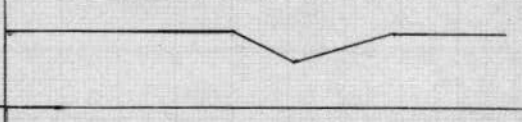
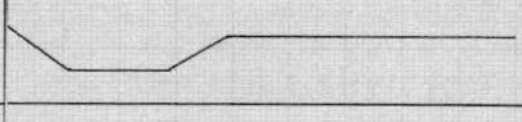
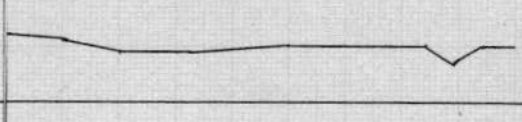
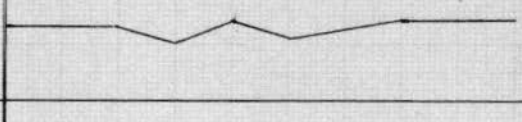
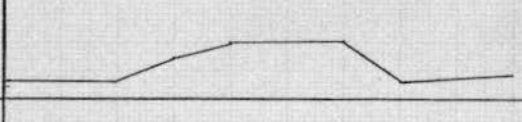
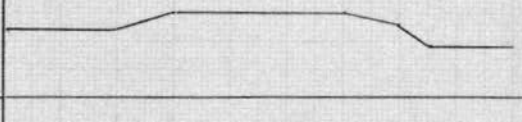
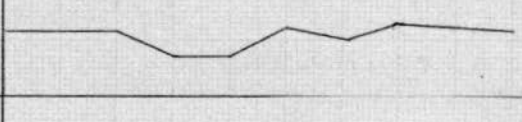
Table 5 - Total broadcast hours by year and time lost

(Time lost is due to technical faults and power failure)

Year	Transmission time per year		Lost minutes per year	
	Hours	Minutes	Technical faults	Power failure
1966	6.300	378.000	2.293	1.191
1967	5.736	344.160	898	1.405
1968	7.094	425.640	878	1.870
1969	7.100	426.000	-	-
1970	7.300	438.000	1.102	1.570
1971	7.300	438.000	355	1.396
1972	7.373	442.380	425	1.958
1973	6.815	408.900	300	303
1974	6.765	405.900	512	77
1975	6.775	406.500	596	130
1976	6.666	399.960	726	210

On the basis of regular monitor's reports from the target areas frequences and time schedules were adjusted from time to time. The following table indicates the general quality of the signal but does not give details about listenability.

Table 6. Graph showing average signal quality of RVOG transmissions

TARGET AREA	SIGNAL RECEPTION	1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976
ETHIOPIA	GOOD FAIR POOR	
MADAGASCAR	GOOD FAIR POOR	
EAST AFRICA	GOOD FAIR POOR	
WEST AFRICA	GOOD FAIR POOR	
ZAIRE/CONGO	GOOD FAIR POOR	
WEST ARAB	GOOD FAIR POOR	
EAST ARAB	GOOD FAIR POOR	
IRAN	GOOD FAIR POOR	
CHINA	GOOD FAIR POOR	
NORTH INDIA	GOOD FAIR POOR	
SOUTH INDIA	GOOD FAIR POOR	

2.3.5. Finances

It is certainly correct to assume that, had all financial implications been known to LWF in 1958, the radio project would most likely never have got off the ground. Today, some years after the RVOG files were closed, it is certainly also correct to assume that LWF and many other organizations would be most willing to run a radio station on the RVOG "financial terms", if this were possible.

When Dr. Birkeli in 1957 talked about the urgency of launching an LWF radio project and said: "I am tempted to say that we must do this no matter how much it might cost", neither he nor anyone else at that time knew what this would mean in terms of money over the years to come. This ignorance of the financial realities which lay ahead made it possible to go forth with the planning. The project was approved on the unrealistic assumption that the annual operating budget would be around US$ 70,000. This amount would have to be multiplied by 20 before the operation period ended.

Financial Policies

Early discussions about how the radio project should be financed indicated both caution and confidence. It was made clear from the beginning that a solid and sound financial basis had to be established prior to any commitment. Commercial as well as "faith mission" principles were rejected and it was stressed that there had to be authorized and assured budgets for investment as well as operation costs.

Consideration was given to a proposal to obtain cost estimates from a commercial consultant, but that idea was dropped. It was felt that information on actual costs from existing independent Protestant radio stations would provide a more reliable picture of what financial demands would be involved in the project. The findings of this survey showed that all of these stations were non-commercial and that most of them operated without a guaranteed budget. LWF took the line that "the first was a must and the second should be avoided." (LWF/CWM. Memorandum of October 16, 1958:6).

Following that line, DWM staff were instructed "to solicit" the judgement of churches and boards concerned and inquire what support they might be willing to pledge." (LWF/CWM.m.1958:16). In accordance with that instruction a questionnaire regarding possible financial support was circulated

to national committees, churches and mission boards in Europe and the United States. Shortage of time made it, however, impossible to obtain definite and final commitments, but it was reported that "the reactions received indicated a sufficiently wide interest in the project to make the prospects of a sound financial support look most encouraging." (Ibid.)

The confidence that sufficient financial support would be forthcoming was also based on the conviction that radio evangelism had caught the imagination of Christians everywhere and that raising of funds for such a project would be comparatively easy. (Ibid. pp. 6 and 9).

In spite of the fact that these judgements were based on unrealistic cost estimates, they proved to be basically true. Even when optimism and confidence resulted in bold planning, the support never failed and necessary funds were always provided. At the same time, caution was always reflected in careful financial planning, tight screening of budget requests and soliciting of pledges from supporting agencies and churches prior to commitments.

Duly authorized annual budgets and reasonably assured support through centralized fund-raising made the RVOG financial administration fundamentally different from most other Christian radio stations. This had mainly to do with the organizational structure of the supporting constituency, but also with administrative principles. Dr. James Kushner has, in his study on International Religious Radio Broadcasting in Africa, given special attention to finances as one of the "problem areas". Having analysed how ELWA, RVOG and the Evangelical radio station CORDAC, in Burundi, were financed, he concludes that RVOG had faced relatively few financial problems due to the fact that its income was assured and raised by one major denomination. He adds that of the three stations, RVOG appeared to have the closest control over its expenses. (Kushner, 1976:188, 195). This is, however, not to say that RVOG had no financial problems, but the principles adopted from the beginning and the system of centralized fund-raising avoided major difficultues.

Sources of Income

As mentioned above, the RVOG administration was not directly responsible for fund-raising. This was done through the normal channels of the two cooperating organizations. When the annual budget was approved it also

meant that the two organizations had included it in their Statement of Needs and had assumed the responsibility for fund-raising.

During the implementation stage of the project, "Party B" contributed only smaller amounts towards operation costs, but they made available an interest-free loan of US$ 250,000 towards capital investment, which was repaid by "Party A" over a period of ten years, beginning 1964. "Party B" was reorganized in 1963 and became the Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting. (CCIB), which then assumed the responsibilities undertaken by NECC according to the "Geneva Agreement". The same year it was agreed that the sharing of operation costs should be done on the basis of broadcast time used by respective groups. General services like audience relations, program exchange, studio facilities and administration costs, were to be included in the calculated broadcast rates. The following three principles were also adopted:

- CCIB should not be involved in the medium wave operation.
- CCIB should have as much use of station facilities as LWF/BS.
- LWF/BS and CCIB should share equally in the cost for free broadcast time granted to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The question of whether depreciation on capital investment should also be a part of the broadcast rate was left open. Dr. Aske suggested that 4% of the total capital investment should be included. He pointed out that if this was not done, it would mean that "Party B" would have a subsidized rate, which was not in line with the agreements. (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:6).

In 1968 the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) assumed the "Party B" responsibilities vis-à-vis RVOG. WACC continued to share the operation costs on a 50-50 basis with LWF/BS but in early 1970, at a joint meeting in February, the agreement made with CCIB in 1963 was re-examined. The whole operation had become more complex. Previous definitions were not valid any longer and it was obvious that many activities were now so interrelated that the previous basis for calculation of airtime rates would no longer be used. The question of whether cooperation should be discontinued and WACC should become a regular "time-buyer" or whether a new formula for cost-sharing should be worked out was discussed. (Report on the Joint Meeting, February 3-4, 1970).

A careful analysis of the operation resulted in an estimated broadcast rate of approximately US$ 100 per hour. WACC was at that time responsible for 45,4% of the total transmission time. Should this rate have been applied, it would have meant a much higher annual cost for WACC than the organization was prepared to cover. It was therefore agreed that the WACC should be charged approx. 27% of the total operating budget. Thus, cost-sharing on the basis of broadcast time was replaced by annual block-grants. In the following years those annual grants were further reduced.

In 1969 a new source of income had developed. Church administered development funds began to be available. LWF/BS and WACC therefore submitted an application jointly to the West German agency Kirchliche Entwicklungs-dienst (KED). (LWF/BS.B.a.1959:Exh.B-1). This resulted in substantial annual grants over the years 1971-1976 towards the operating budget of RVOG. These grants, which were earmarked for airtime costs for programs considered to have a developmental character, were shared between LWF/BS and WACC.

It should also be mentioned here that in accordance with an agreement between LWF and the LUTHERAN HOUR in 1959, that organization not only granted US$ 100,000 towards capital investment, but also contributed regularly to the annual budget. (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:8).

The following two tables show the main sources of income and sharing of the operation costs by year. Table 1 indicates only the main contributors and what their respective share of the budget was. Contributions from the LUTHERAN HOUR and occasional gifts from other sources are included in the "Party A" share. KED grants as of 1971 indicate the total amount per year. Table 2 gives a breakdown of contributions.

Table 1: Sharing of operation costs by year

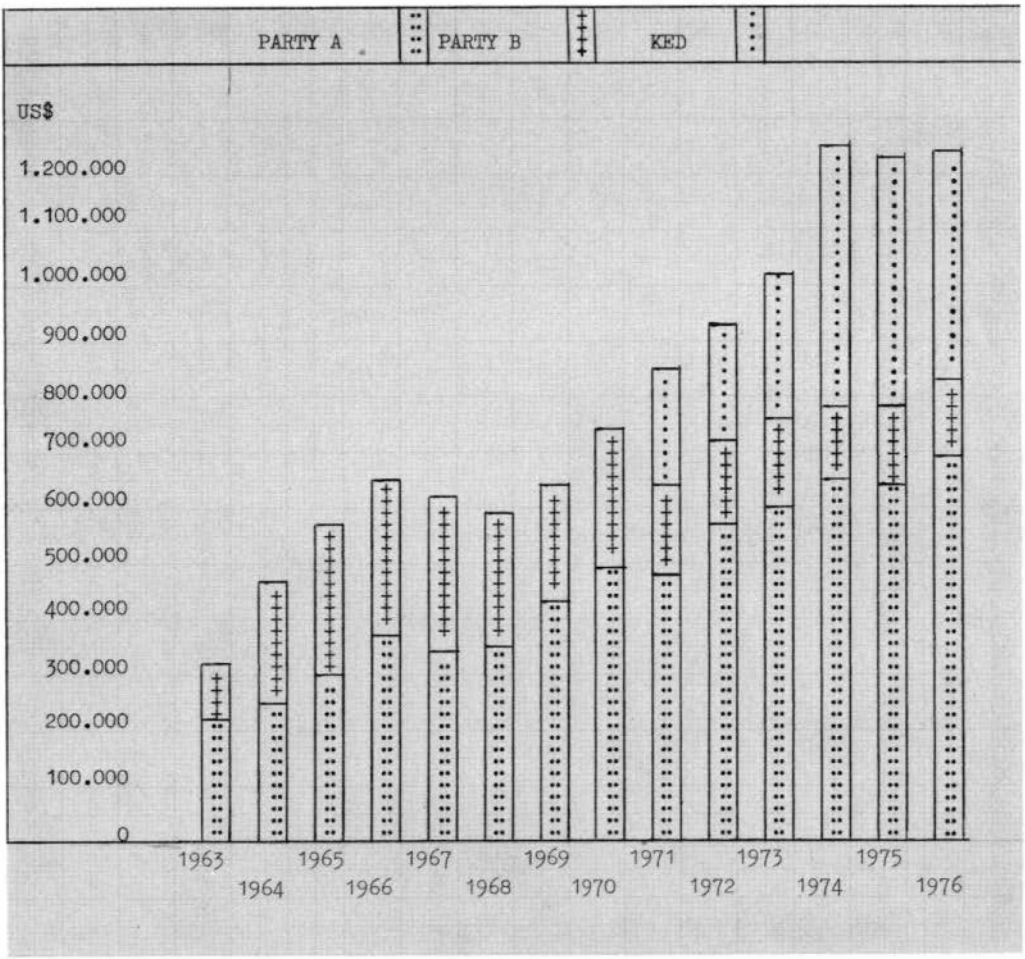


Table 2 - Breakdown of annual contributions 1968-1976

Contributing Agency	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Annual budget	625.065	680.798	736.132	866.516	925.092	1.094.793	1.241.606	1.227.595	1.228.015
"Party B"	235.033	242.899	247.500	148.461	149.695	154.458	122.138	125.675	133.175
USA National Committee	125.827	174.397	163.290	149.935	176.378	84.318	211.388	135.656	175.458
Canada National Committee	5.580	5.808	5.946	3.940	3.715	3.212	5.000	5.584	4.106
German National Committee	128.578	190.848	224.070	247.989	297.273	457.878	324.710	373.391	327.430
Swedish National Committee	45.077	45.055	73.675	54.944	65.000	71.072	98.390	98.532	150.000
Danish National Committee	4.807	4.912	5.133	5.186	5.567	7.531	6.841	7.921	6.899
Norwegian National Committee	8.423	5.780	10.353	14.732	5.085	17.863	5.191	7.655	7.000
Finnish National Committee	2.116	5.085	5.000	10.000	10.000	12.000	15.000	10.000	10.000
Germany KED				205.406	226.497	239.200	418.287	475.002	467.917
Other	44.624	6.015	1.298	1.407	8.900	31.907	535	-	405
	600.065	680.799	736.265	842.000	948.110	1.079.439	1.207.480	1.239.416	1.282.390

Note: 1. Discrepancies between approved budget and contributions in a given year have to do with time of transfer and entries. Undesignated funds of CWM were used to cover deficits.

2. KED grants include both LWF/BS and WACC shares.

3. LUTHERAN HOUR contributions are not specified but are included in "Other".

4. In most countries contributions were made by several agencies but have here been included under 'National Committees'.

Development of operating costs

Due to the fact that the largest portion of the RVOG annual budget consisted of items which had to do with employment contracts and other legal obligations, there was a more or less automatic development built into it. It was liable to cost-of-living indexes and inflation as well as international currency exchange rates.

The following tables show the volume of funds used each year from 1963 through to 1976 and the distribution of them among the major areas of activities at the station. Costs for operation of the area studios, international scholarships and the Broadcasting Service central administration costs from 1968, when it was moved to Geneva, are not included.

Table 1 - Volume of operating costs by year

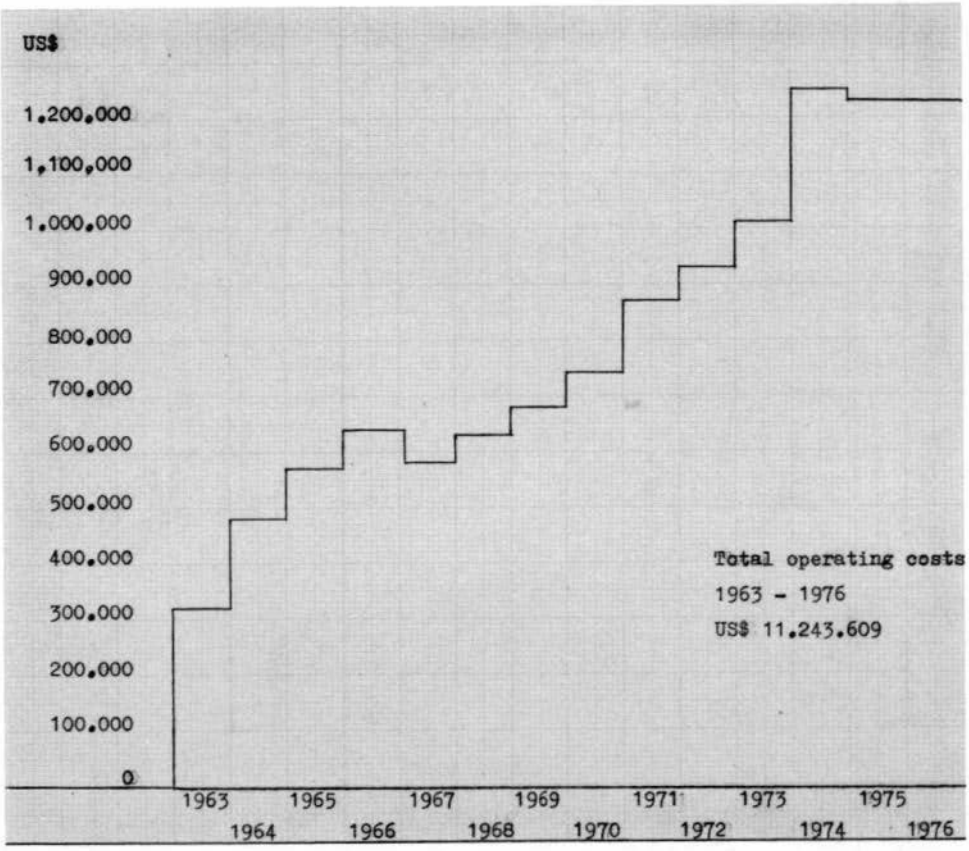


Table 2 - Annual operating costs by department and year

Year	Personnel costs	Administration costs	Tech.Dept. costs	Progr./News Dept. costs	DARP costs	Other costs	Total US$
	Breakdown of RVOG operating costs						
1963	177.311	67.275	50.568	22.294			317.448
1964	259.486	78.086	106.653	29.533		25.000	498.758
1965	281.164	91.416	152.301	33.282		39.737	597.900
1966	330.168	86.419	157.392	59.486		29.260	662.725
1967	379.486	79.506	109.144	48.757		25.000	641.893
1968	383.186	86.861	96.373	33.645		25.000	625.065
1969	409.193	77.982	115.284	39.669		38.670	680.798
1970	450.040	78.159	111.485	49.592		46.856	736.132
1971	517.715	103.298	111.621	59.987	11.965	61.930	866.516
1972	606.289	113.056	106.026	43.214	29.300	27.207	925.092
1973	738.731	128.270	109.460	52.419	35.678	30.235	1.094.793
1974	884.478	147.531	116.287	55.909	32.287	5.114	1.241.606
1975	796.972	142.747	148.265	69.455	41.132	29.024	1.227.595
1976	804.640	185.568	128.457	65.655	29.169	14.526	1.228.015
							11.344.336

Additional operation costs 1960 = 55.383 1961 = 123.070 1962 = 163.475 — 341.928

1977, January 1st - March 11th = 186.626, repatriation costs = 197.367 and confiscated funds = 186.835 — 570.828

Special projects 1974-1977 — 178.910

Total operation costs US$ 12.436.002

Personnel costs were distributed as follows in 1977:
Administration 25%, Tech.Dept. 31%, Progr.Dept. 19%
News Dept. 14% and DARP 11%

Brief analysis of operation costs

The above figures show that between 1963 and 1976 the budget increase was almost 400%. It is also obvious that the main reason for this was personnel costs.

To get a more comprehensive picture of the RVOG operation costs we can reduce them to an average airtime rate. If we exclude the medium wave operation, which was estimated at approximately US$ 30,000 per year and also exclude production costs for programs and news at the station, we arrive at the following:

Table 1 - Shortwave operation including full depreciation on capital investment

Capital investment:	US$	2.382.785 [1]	
Less installation of the medium wave transmitter		61.666	2.321.119
Operation costs 1960-1977		12.257.092	
Plus various projects:			
Production trainer 1974-1976		34.683	
Techn. Consultant 1975-1976		22.708	
Promotion/publicity		9.240	
News Trainer		4.719	
Oromo News Service		3.393	
Techn. spare-parts		100.000	
Transmitter foundation repair		4.167	12.436.002
			14.757.121
Less			
Medium wave operation 13 x 30.000		390.000 [2]	
Production of French programs		871.279	
Production of English programs		1.189.895	
The News operation		2.489.207	4.940.581 [3]
Shortwave capital and operation costs, grand total			9.816.740

Total shortwave broadcast hours 1963-1976 = 90.037
Average cost per hour US$ 109,03

Table 2 - Medium wave transmission costs

Capital investment	61.666	
Operation costs 13 x 30.000	390.000	
		451.666

Total medium wave broadcast hours 1964-1976 = 27.764
Average cost per hour US$ 16,26

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1) Price Waterhouse Audit Report 1977
2) Estimate in the 1968 Financial Report
3) See cost analysis Tables 3-5

Table 3 - Production costs of English programs produced at RVOC [4]

Item		1968	1970	1972	1974	1976
Expatriate staff		49.028	86.214	105.240	123.360	146.296
Local staff		6.000	10.000	24.000	31.500	36.000
Production costs		2.423	7.202	4.889	10.346	7.929
Total		57.451	103.416	134.129	165.206	190.225
Cost per minute/ program	US$	0,95	1,45	1,70	2,26	2,67

Table 4 - Production costs of French programs

Item		1968	1970	1972	1974	1976
Expatriate staff		49.028	43.107	87.700	123.360	109.722
Local staff		3.000	5.000	16.000	21.000	24.000
Production costs		1.039	6.135	3.259	7.805	4.691
Total		53.067	54.242	106.959	152.165	138.413
Cost per minute/ program	US$	1,26	0,95	2,02	2,77	2,52

Table 5 - Production costs of news bulletins

Item		1968	1970	1972	1974	1976
Expatriate staff		110.313	129.321	192.940	271.392	365.740
Local staff		15.000	30.000	48.000	52.500	60.000
Wire services etc.		16.972	19.345	20.323	27.867	37.699
Total		142.285	178.666	261.263	351.759	463.439
Cost per news bulletin	US$	19,50	22,25	28,65	40,15	52,90

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4) The formula used for calculations of Tables 3-5 is the following: Personnel costs for expatriate staff in a given year are divided by number of staff and multiplied by the number of people involved in respective activity. The same is done with regard to local staff. General services, such as administration, transportation and library, are not included. Should that be done, it would increase the cost by 100%.

Some general remarks

Considering the scope of the RVOG operation and the volume of funds involved, Kushner is certainly right when he says that RVOG had relatively few financial problems. At the same time, it is also clear from the official records that there was all along a deep concern within the LWF/BS Board (and later Committee of Communication) as well as in the constituency at large, with respect to the cost developments of the radio project. Budgets were carefully scrutinized and drastically cut at times. The question of deriving some income by sale of airtime was discussed on several occasions, but the Board was not prepared to change the character of the station by doing that. Secondment of staff with all costs paid by recruiting organizations was also seriously discussed as well as broadening of the ecumenical cooperation to thereby achieve a broader financial basis. Another serious problem was the growing dependence on only a few contributing agencies within the LWF constituency. (see Table 2). This dependence was considered dangerous, not least with regard to the image of the station.

The fundamental social and political changes in Ethiopia after 1974 had also serious financial implications for RVOG. When the leadership of the station took the initiative to establish more equality among staff, this meant substantial increases of personnel costs. The proposed Collective Agreement indicates that, had RVOG been allowed to continue, the bill for local employees' salaries and other benefits would have increased considerably.

It should also be added that replacement of the two shortwave transmitters was long overdue in 1977 when the station was taken over by the Government. Had the operation continued, a new heavy capital investment would have been necessary.

In spite of the substantial cost increase over the years, the average airtime cost compares most favourably with commercial rates. (see cost analysis, Table 1).

2.3.6. Ecumenical Cooperation

Within less than a year prior to the opening of RVOG, three important meetings had taken place which all dealt with the cooperation between LWF/BS and its ecumenical partners. We have already seen how the Addis Ababa consultation in May 1962 at least temporarily resolved the problems which had been building up between "Party A and B" during the implementation period. We have also seen how the search for an improved model for cooperation led to the "Paris meeting" in August the same year, and how that meeting resulted in the first restructuring of "Party B" just one month before the official opening of RVOG.

All these efforts indicate the determination of the partners to stay together and make the project a success, in spite of the differences which prevailed. We shall now follow the developments of the ecumenical cooperation through the operational period of the station. We shall do this in some detail because of its importance for the image of the station and the impact of its radio ministry.

With regard to "Party B", this development had three stages and we shall review each one of them in their chronological succession. There were also working relations with other ecumenical partners at this time which were of significant importance for the broadcasting ministry, and we shall also come back to these relations.

The Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadcasting (CCIB) 1963-1965

We have already mentioned that LWF received the "Paris proposals" with great appreciation. (LWF/CWM.m.1962:18). With a few amendments, the LWF/BS Board, which met at the same time, approved the proposals. (LWF/BS.B.m.1962:3-4). The same was done by the other organizations concerned. Following that, the NECC took the initiative to convene the organizational meeting. This took place in the Ethiopian capital on January 12-16, 1963.

The founding members of the new body were the following:

- The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
- The East Asia Christian Conference (EACC)
- The Near East Christian Council (NECC)
- The Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (WCC/DWME).

Each of the founding members should have one voting member on the Committee and in addition there should be one "Liaison Officer" from each region who should serve as a resource person. The Liaison Officers should be competent specialists in broadcasting and/or communication and be related in this capacity to the body represented. The Director and Program Director of RVOG as well as the executive officers of RAVEMCCC and the newly organized World Association for Christian Broadcasting (WACB), should serve as "ex officio consulting members". The CCIB should normally have meetings once a year and consecutively also arrange joint consultations with the LWF/BS Executive Committee.

The organizational meeting of CCIB elected the WCC/DWME representative, Dr. George Carpenter, as its Chairman. The meeting also adopted a "Summary Statement" which outlined the future cooperation with LWF/BS. The most important points in this Statement are the following:

- The principles embodied in the Geneva Agreement of 1959 and the Paris Agreement of 1962 were re-affirmed.
- The responsibilities and privileges of "Party B", previously carried by NECC, should henceforth devolve upon CCIB.
- The Committee should assume full responsibility for 50% of shortwave broadcasting in 1963 and be expected to do so in the future also.
- The Committee should make available to the station the special competence of its members and advisors.
- The overall aim should be a united operation.

It was also recommended that previous agreements should be reviewed as soon as possible. (CCIB Standing Rules of 1963). The CCIB Executive Chairman, Dr. Carpenter, and the LWF/BS Board Chairman, Dr. Schiotz, prepared a draft "Agreement Governing the Cooperation of the LWF/BS and the CCIB in the Use of Station RVOG." for the next meeting of CCIB. In May 1963, at its meeting at Limuru, Kenya, the CCIB approved that document and the LWF/BS Board did the same at its meeting at Stavanger in Norway two months later. (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:15).

This document, which was based on the Geneva Agreement of 1959, clearly reflected the experience from previous years of cooperation and spelt out in more detail the working relations between the two parties. The spirit in which the CCIB had taken over the role of "Party B" and the clarity of the new agreement, provided for the best possible cooperation at the beginning of the RVOG radio ministry. Both parties also expressed their

appreciation of the new state of relations and their confidence that future cooperation would be fruitful. (LWF/BS.B-m-1963:6). Robert Van Deusen describes this as "a wholesome development, ending as it did a period of 'unequal yoking' between a world federation which owned and operated the broadcasting project and a regional council which found itself in the role of a privileged time-buyer." (Van Deusen, 1968:15).

The new "Party B" had not only a broader ecumenical constituency than the original "Party B", but was also composed in such a way that it had an inter-cultural expertise at its disposal, which provided a valuable asset for the radio ministry. This was also recognized by the RVOG Director when he at the organizational meeting of CCIB said: "Never before has there been an opportunity to bring together such competent persons from Africa, Asia and the Near East to review the entire strategy of the station". (CCIB.m.January 1963:6).

The CCIB period in the ministry of RVOG seems to have been a most fruitful and constructive period, when the ecumenical cooperation was at its best. The mutual aim, to make the RVOG operation a united ministry, was largely achieved during this period. In a year following the constitution of CCIB, the two staff houses built with "Party B" funds were turned over to RVOG. (CCIB.m. January 1964). Two years later the CCIB annual meeting reviewed the collaboration and suggested that the CCIB representative at the station should become "an integral member of the senior staff of RVOG and that the CCIB office as a separate entity should be closed". It was also stated that those initial years had been "an unprecidented linking together of the two committees and constituencies, one confessional and the other conciliar." (CCIB.m.1965:Appendix D).

Records from this period indicate, however, that certain differences continued to cause tension. These had mainly to do with station/studio relationships. There had been complaints that politically sensitive issues in the Near East had not been handled carefully enough in the RVOG news service. The churches were concerned because it might endanger their relations to the authorities. CCIB supported their view and meant that RVOG did not take the churches and the studios seriously. There was also the question of training. CCIB wanted a more studio-oriented training while LWF/BS argued that a centralized training at the station would be more effective.

When these two questions were discussed at the annual meetings in Jerusalem in 1965, Dr. Carpenter expressed concern about this important policy matter. He said: "The deepest question of relationship arises from the tension between a station-centered and a studio-centered view of the total operation. We are concerned at any move which would increase station dominance." (CCIB.m.1965:18). The LWF/BS and the RVOG leadership maintained that the control of program content and news bulletins had to do with the ultimate responsibility which the owner of the station had for broadcast content. (Joint Consultation m.April 1965).

At the same time as a remarkable progress had been made in achieving the aim of making RVOG a united operation, the basic issue of full partnership, which "Party B" had been hoping for, had not been resolved. Following the April 1965 meetings in Jerusalem, Dr. Carpenter again raised the old question of a joint board with power to take joint actions. The LWF/BS Executive Committee which dealt with this question at its meeting in September 1965 resolved to re-state its earlier decision that with ownership went also the responsibility and the right to make decisions which had to do with the operation. (LWF/BS.EC.Sept.1965:2).

The CCIB in its original form was short-lived. Already two years after it had been constituted, plans for re-organization and expansion were under way. By this the RVOG ecumenical cooperation went into its next phase.

The Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting (CCCB), 1966-1968

At the same time as LWF/BS began to expand into a global operation by opening two mass-media centres in the Far East, which has been dealt with earlier, the CCIB was contemplating broadening its scope and function. These plans with the two organizations seem to have developed independently of each other. It was at the Jerusalem meetings in April 1965 that Dr. Carpenter informed the participants about the CCIB plans to reconstitute itself in order to serve a larger constituency. He said that the new constitution should become effective in January 1966 and that the new name should be "Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting." (LWF/BS.EC.m.April 1965:4).

CCIB had been formed in January 1963 with the single purpose of making it possible for a broader ecumenical constituency to make use of RVOG than NECC had been able to do. This purpose had been achieved and the cooperation had contributed to the building up of a larger audience as well as to the professional reputation of the station.

The reason why it was considered appropriate and necessary to re-organize CCIB was not dissatisfaction with what had been achieved, but a new role conception derived from experience in the past and assessment of the future. The development of these plans was significant because they reflected the growing media awareness in the churches around the world. It is also interesting to note that similar developments took place in the two organizations at the same time.

The constitution for CCIB which provided the framework for a global operation, was adopted in principle at the 1965 annual meeting. The new committee should consist of 14 voting members representing church bodies in six major geographical areas. Those church bodies and the WCC/DWME should name two representatives each. One of the two should be a communication expert and relate in this capacity to the body represented. (CCIB Constitution, Article II, Section 1).

The enlarged representation and the stipulated qualifications for voting membership reflected the new role conception of "Party B" and made it a global church agency with an inter-cultural expertise in the field of Christian communication.

The reorientation and restructuring of the two parties also had practical implications. Even if RVOG remained a project of mutual concern and interest, it was no longer the only one. This was, in a sense, a wholesome development because it contributed to the shift from previous concepts of institutional radio broadcasting to an integral concept of Christian communication, which should take place in the following years.

Another implication of the conceptual and structural changes was that, as of that time, there were three closely related global agencies for Christian communication with subsequent problems of overlapping and competition. This question was already raised at the meeting in Jerusalem 1965. It was pointed out that there was a need for clarification

with regard to relationships between the new CCCB and WACB. In the ensuing discussion, the participants seem to have accepted a tentative definition to the effect that CCCB should work on behalf of the churches and WACB should work in terms of projects. (CCCB.m.April 1965:8). It should, however, not take long before this issue had to be reviewed again.

The problem of overlapping and competition should also shortly occur between CCCB and the LWF/BS regarding mass-media projects in the Far East. At the same time as LWF/BS, by invitation from the Lutheran churches in the area and upon request by CWM, decided to establish the Far East Mass Media Officies, CCCB was requested to assist the National Christian Council of Japan, the United Church of Christ and other Christian groups in the country, with the planning for a Christian Mass Communication Centre. Through consultation and coordination of these plans, the problem seems to have been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved. (CCCB.m.1967.Exh.H).

With regard to RVOG, the reorganization of "Party B" did not imply any changes. CCCB assumed all the obligations and privileges in the use of RVOG which its predecessor had, and the cooperation continued in the same spirit as before. In spite of this, the most serious crisis in the ecumenical cooperation developed just at this time.

The CCCB was meeting in Baden, Austria, on April 27-28, 1967, when it was reported that NECC at its triennial assembly a week earlier, had decided to discontinue its participation in the radio project at the earliest possible date. This drastic action by NECC came as a surprise, although it had been known that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction in the NECC with the RVOG service.

There had for some time been complaints about poor reception of the RVOG signal on the West Arab beam. The station had done its best to resolve this problem but could not do much because it had to do with the high congestion on available frequences. Another issue which had caused a great deal of uneasiness and tension, was the question of Arabic news. This had been discussed on several occasions and when no satisfactory solution was found, this service had been discontinued in 1965. NECC had also been contemplating a shift from shortwave to medium wave broadcasting for some time and that question was under study at the time when the decision to

discontinue cooperation was taken. In addition there seems to have been a feeling among some of the leaders that RVOG had been imposed on the NECC by western agencies. (CCCB.m.April 1967). This feeling was probably related to a deeper problem, namely a general reaction against western dominance in the NECC church affairs. In 1964 the NECC had reviewed and revised its constitution and at that time not only had the name been changed from "Christian Council" to "Council of Churches", which was significant in itself, but membership had also been limited to churches in the area. This meant that western based mission organizations no longer were eligible for membership. (Van Deusen, 1968:358). This explains also the sensitivity at that time with regard to RVOG policies and actions. The NECC decision had not been taken unanimously. The vote was taken with a narrow margine of 10-12 and apparently also against recommendations of the special team which had studied the matter. Representatives of churches in Iraq, Iran and the Sudan had been outvoted by delegates from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. This situation left the possibility open that the last word in this matter was not said.

CCCB took its role as "Party B" seriously and drafted a response in which it was said that IWP/BS should be notified that, as of May 1, 1968, CCCB should require three and a half hours less daily airtime on RVOG. It was pointed out that contractual commitments had to be observed,and recommended that during this period the NECC broadcasting should concentrate on Sudan, Iran and Iraq. RAVEMCCO also underlined the value of shortwave broadcasting to these areas in a special statement. (CCCB.m.1976:63).

CCCB continued to do its best to avert negative effects of the NECC decision for both RVOG and the audiences concerned. The newly elected Executive Secretary of CCCB, Dr. Philip Johnson, was instructed to follow up on this matter and the CCCB Officers were empowered to take any interim action which might be needed. The Department on Radio Broadcasting of the NECC took the advice of CCCB and RAVEMCCO seriously and asked the NECC leadership to reconsider its earlier decision. (Van Deusen, 1968:364). At the next annual meeting of the CCCB it was reported that the Central Committee of NECC had taken the following vote:

"In view of the fact that the Radio Division has not yet made effective studies of the medium wave broadcasting possibilities, the Central Committee finds that it is essential to continue broadcasting through RVOG until the time when other channels can be developed."
(CCB.m.1968:2)

It was also reported that the churches in Sudan, Iraq and Iran had protested against the decision of the triennial meeting and had pointed out that shortwave broadcasting was their only possibility to make use of radio. Greek Orthodox, Armenian and all Protestant denominations in the area had also appealed to NBCC for reconsideration of the decision.

It should also be added that, had the NBCC decision in April 1967 not been reversed in time, the implications for LWF/BS and the station would have been grave. The image of RVOG as an ecumenical broadcasting ministry would have suffered greatly. Technically it would have been difficult to employ the vacated antenna which was specifically designed for the Near East. Financially it would have meant a much bigger share of the RVOG budget for LWF/BS. The way CCCB handled the crisis and the contribution by its officers to the final solution of the problem, ought to be recognized.

At the same time as the NBCC crisis was resolved, the next reorganization of "Party B" was due. Dr. Philip Potter, Director of the WCC/DWME had replaced Dr. Carpenter as Chairman of CCCB and Dr. Philip Johnson had been appointed Executive Secretary of the Committee at the meeting in Baden 1967. These two men should be instrumental in the merger between CCCB and WACB, which took place a year later. (CCCB.m.1967:64).

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and the "honourable retirement of Party B"

Already three months after CCCB had assumed the role of "Party B" the first suggestion of merger between CCCB and WACB was made. We recall that the question of how the two organizations should relate to each other and the need to define their respective function was already discussed in 1965. The same question was again raised at the CCCB meeting in London on April 18-20, 1966. At that time it was the Chairman, Dr. Potter, who pointed out that there was a great deal of overlap between CCCB and WACB and that there was a strong case for the two bodies to work more closely together. The Executive Director of WACB, Rev'd. Edwin Robertson, made similar remarks. The ensuing discussion resulted in a proposal to merge the two organizations. (CCCB.m.1966:23-25).
The origin of WACB can be traced back to a meeting at Chichester, England, in 1950. At that time an "Informal International Conference" was held to discuss aims and methods of religious broadcasting. The conference did

not result in any formal organization, but three years later another meeting was arranged at Bossey in Switzerland. That meeting organized itself into what was called "The World Committee for Christian Broadcasting" (WCCB). This group started a quarterly journal called "The Christian Broadcaster". The first issue of this publication appeared in October 1953.

The WCCB invited to the First World Conference in 1957 at Cronberg Castle near Frankfurt. More than a hundred delegates from all over the world, representing Christian and secular radio and TV stations, attended that conference. The main concern around which the deliberations at that meeting centred was "that the churches all over the world should recognize the importance of radio and TV for proclamation of the Christian message." In the following years it became more and more clear that a stronger organization with greater administrative power was needed. At the next World Assembly, which was held in New Delhi in November 1961, the WACB was provisionally constituted. The Board of the LWF/BS had authorized Aske to attend the conference and this resulted in his appointment to the position of interim Executive Director of the WACB. He served in this capacity until the next assembly, which was held at Limuru, Kenya, in April 1963. In the meantime, the LWF/BS Board had decided to take up membership in WACB. (LWF/BS.B.m.1962:4).

At the 1963 meeting, WACB approved the final draft for its constitution. Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli was elected Chairman and Rev'd. Edwin Robertson was named Executive Director.

The development of WACB made it more and more urgent to resolve the question of relationships to CCCB. It was therefore not surprising that consolidation of the two organizations was proposed at the CCCB meeting in London in April 1966. Following that meeting, consultations continued and in February 1968 representatives of the two organizations met again in London to prepare the final proposal which was to be presented at the WACB World Assembly in Oslo, Norway, in June the same year.

At the Oslo Assembly a special meeting was arranged on June 20th to discuss the implications of the proposed merger. Aske expressed hope that the interests of CCCB as a partner to LWF/BS would not be diluted by the merger. The Chairman assured him that this should not happen and suggested that a statement should be made at the opening session of the Assembly

"on the history, philosophy, operations and concerns of CCCB.".

On June 24th, 1968, the new constitution was formally approved and consolidation of the two organizations into the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) was announced. This should take effect in January 1969.

According to the constitution, the WACC should have a special Department of Church Related Communiction (DCRC) and a committee was set up to handle matters assigned to this Department. Among the duties of DCRC was also to execute the responsibilities and functions embodied in the agreement between CCCB and LWF/BS, dated January 16, 1963. (WACC Constitution Art.II:12). Dr. Potter was appointed Chairman of DCRC.

The first joint consultation after the merger, took place in Copenhagen on December 5th, 1969. In a lengthy discussion the past, present and future relationships were reviewed and it was again stated that the closest possible cooperation was essential for both organizations. Philip Johnson and Sigurd Aske were asked to work out a proposal for a new agreement to be presented at the next meeting. (Joint Consultation report 1969:1).

Already in February the following year the two partners met again for urgent consultations. The main subject to be discussed at that time was finances and related policies. WACC had in the meantime decided to pledge a block grant towards the RVOG budget rather than take its share according to the formula previously used. The reasons for this have already been mentioned in the section on RVOG finances. Aske had, in the discussion about whether WACC should step out of the "Party B" relation and become a regular "time-buyer", stated that "there was unanimity that the cut in financial support ... should not be followed by WACC withdrawing itself from the operation of RVOG.". "Time and again RVOC leadership had expressed the conviction that the best forum for policy and planning has been the joint Party A - Party B consultations", he said. (Aske, Statement on Relationships, November 1969). At the LWF/BS Executive Committee meeting in Geneva on March 4, 1970, a new draft agreement was presented which did not specify any formula for sharing of operation expenses. It was only said: "The budget is approved by the LWF/BS Board after due consultation with WACC." (LWF/BS.a.1966:Exh. 1)

In his report to the Board the next year, Aske referred to the annual joint consultations and underlined that they had been "of a tremendous value to LWF/BS", and he added: "The closest possible cooperation is of the essence." (LWF/BS.a.1971).

These actions and remarks are important because they reflect a new and deeper understanding of the ecumenical cooperation than just economic partnership. In spite of disagreements and tensions, and in spite of structural changes, the two partners had grown together into a fellowship which was so essential that it had to be maintained at any cost. The joint consultations had also at that time expanded into new areas of cooperation.

It is certainly possible to say that from the beginning of the 1970's the ecumenical cooperation went into a new era. The time seems to be ripe for the full partnership which "Party B" had been desiring from the beginning. In a report to the LWF Executive Committee in July 1972, Aske said: "Pending the decision on structures of the Broadcasting Service, staff is presently thinking in terms of a special board for operation of RVOG, providing for WACC membership and vote." (LEF.EC.a.1972:Exh.F.2). These remarks indicated that a radical review of relationships was now due.

WACC voting membership on the LWF/BS Board was approved by the LWF Executive Committee, but "for legal reasons" the procedure would have to be that nominations done by WACC should be subject to formal approval and appointments by LWF. Following this principle decision, extensive relationship negotiations seem to have taken place. At the LWF/BS Board meeting in February 1973, a proposal to establish a permanent WACC - LWF/BS Coordination Committee was approved. This was also later approved by WACC and the first meeting of this Committee took place in Gothenburg, Sweden, on November 7-9, 1973. The setting up of this Committee marked the end of a long road in search of the most practical form of working relations between the two cooperating partners. In the introductory paragraph of the "Statement of Relationships", which the two organizations had approved in 1973, it was said that "the distinction between Party A and Party B was herewith honourably retired." (LWF/BS.B.a.1974:Exh.F.2).

In the following years the Coordinating Committee met regularly two times a year. Even if differences and disagreements have prevailed over the years,

the cooperation has constantly expanded into new areas and the fellowship has grown stronger. The nationalization of RVOG in March 1977 did not put this working relationship into question because the cooperation was at that time so deeply rooted in a number of other joint undertakings and mutual interests, that it was not even considered to review the relations again.

Other Ecumenical Partners

It would certainly take us too far if we should enumerate and review all the ecumenical contacts and relations which belong in the history of RVOG, but there are some other partners which ought to be mentioned in order to complete the picture of RVOG as an ecumenical and open broadcasting ministry.

The LUTHERAN HOUR

It may seem a little strange to call cooperation with this agency "ecumenical" since it belongs in the same confessional family as RVOG itself. The reason is simply that the LUTHERAN HOUR (LH) was an agency sponsored by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is not a member of LWF and cooperation was therefore not a matter of course.

The initial talks about cooperation with the LUTHERAN HOUR were marked by a great deal of hesitation on both sides. We have already mentioned that the response from LH to the first feeler regarding possible cooperation with LWF was cautious. (LWF/CWM.a.1958:9). Following the first negotiations in June 1960, the President of LWF, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, expressed his reservations and asked whether it was desirable to involve the LH in the radio project. (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:Exh.1).

Right from the beginning the LH was, however, considered one of the most experienced Christian broadcasting agencies at that time and its radio ministry had been most successful. It was therefore considered a valuable partner at the same time as LH considered RVOG a valuable outfit for its ministry.

The LH started its radio ministry as early as in 1930 and developed rapidly, first as a domestic broadcasting agency and later expanded into international broadcasting, using existing national, private and commercial networks. The motto of this ministry was "Bringing Christ to the Nations". By 1950 LH was broadcasting in 36 languages over stations in 55 countries.

During the 1950's, LH also began to establish program production studios in several parts of the world. (Van Deusen, 1968:114-119).

With this background, it is understandable that both LWF and LH were interested in a cooperation in spite of certain hesitation on the part of their respective church leaders.

At a meeting in Geneva on June 28th, 1960, representatives of the two organizations negotiated an agreement which gave LH broadcast time on RVOG. The agreement also provided for LH representation at the LWF/BS Board meetings with the same status as "Party B" had. (LWF/CWM.a.1960:Exh.D).

The LH contribution towards the RVOG capital investment was first set at US$ 50,000, but was later increased to US$ 100,000. It was also agreed that LH should make an annual contribution towards the operation costs, proportionate to broadcasting. The cooperation between LH and LWF/BS was most cordial and it contributed greatly to the RVOG ministry by providing both quality programming and professional expertise. The records do not indicate that there was any major issue of disagreement between the two partners.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Among the non-Lutheran church organizations with which RVOG was closely related, the ancient Orthodox Church in Ethiopia was in a category of its own. It was also the only church which was specifically mentioned in the agreement with the Ethiopian Government.

To begin with the leadership of this church was against the establishment of RVOG in Ethiopia. Had not the Emperor insisted on its participation and made arrangements for program production outside the Patriarchate, there would have been no Orthodox programming over RVOG. When Robert Van Deusen, therefore, is assuming that the cordial relations between Lutheran missions working in Ethiopia and the Orthodox Church might have been a factor in granting of the franchise to LWF, he is certainly mistaken. (Van Deusen 1968:113). As we have seen earlier, the franchise was granted to LWF because the Emperor wanted an international radio station and the LWF was politically more important to him than the NFCC was. From the very outset conditions for cooperation with this church were therefore not the best.

In the agreement with the Government, the Orthodox Church was both protected against being attacked in RVOG broadcasts and guaranteed a minimum of 30 minutes daily broadcast free of charge. (Government agreement Art.X:c and IX:2).

In spite of unfavourable conditions to begin with, the cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church developed into a genuine and cordial working relationship, which also contributed to bringing this church out of its seclusion and broadening its ecumenical contacts as well as to the building up of a larger RVOG audience in Ethiopia.

The Roman Catholic "Voice of Africa"

In April 1972 representatives of WACC and LWF/BS met in Wassenaar, Holland, with representatives of the Roman Catholic Foundation Voice of Africa. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possibilities for cooperation. This Foundation had developed advanced plans for radio broadcasting in Africa. Substantial funds had been raised for that purpose and land as well as a franchise had been obtained in Liberia. WACC had advised that it would be better to build a relay station for RVOG than another independent radio station in Africa. It was to explore the possibilities for such a cooperation that the consultation was arranged. The consensus of the meeting was summarized as follows:

"1. There is a strong and basic desire by the parties concerned to continue the efforts to further explore the possibilities of a practical cooperation between Voice of Africa and Radio Voice of the Gospel. 2. Such cooperation would best follow the pattern of the present WACC-LWF/BS partnership, presently under review and therefore providing for future changes. 3. Cooperation in training and ecumenical relations in terms of support and participation in local program production efforts are already a fact in Africa and should be strengthened. 4. RVOG technical staff is asked to undertake a study of possible ways to strengthen the present shortwave signal, to explore the whole aspect of establishing shortwave and medium wave relay stations, specifically geared initially to the possibility of a cooperation between RVOG in Ethiopia and Voice of Africa presently under planning in Liberia. 5. Exploration into the readiness of Protestant/Catholic cooperation in the strengthening of program production capacity is equally required and requested." (LWF/BS.EC.June 1972:Exh.L).

Reporting on these negotiations, Dr. Aske was authorized by the LWF/BS Executive Committee to proceed with consultations along the lines drawn up. The understanding was that LWF/BS would deal with the Roman Catholics through WACC. (LWF/BS.EC.June 1972:5). These plans never materialized except that local cooperation in program production was strengthened in Africa. Roman Catholic contacts in the field of Christian communication have also continued in a number of other projects. Together with WACC, the LWF is for example participating in the Documentation Service of the Roman Catholic Media Council in Achen. At the same time as working relationships were established and maintained with pro-WCC and Roman Catholic agencies, RVOG also maintained relationships with "Evangelical" agencies. (cf.p.21). In conclusion it should be pointed out that the ecumenical cooperation was one of the most significant features of the RVOG broadcasting ministry. It was a tremendous asset to the station at the same time as it was a bone of contention. It was also grossly misjudged at the same time as there was a deep mutual appreciation, which no outer circumstances could disrupt. The model of cooperation which was maintained until 1974, when "Party B" was "honourably retired", was based on the assumption that a joint ownership of the station was not possible and that ownership, by necessity, implied ultimate responsibility, which in turn required a unilateral administration. For this reason it was not considered possible to allow "full partnership", inspite of the financial and professional contributions made by "Party B". It is, however, possible that if the model introduced in 1974, which Dr. Carpenter had already proposed in 1965, had been implemented earlier, much of the tension and misunderstandings might have been avoided. At the same time it is also obvious that the unilateral administration of the radio project made it much easier to resolve complications, particularly with regard to government relations.

When Dr. Philip Johnson therefore talks about "a constant feeling of frustration on the part of the ecumenical partner", it is perhaps understandable as a personal experience, but it is a one-sided generalization which is not a fair assessment. (Christoph Jahn, 1973:175). Dr. Robert Van Deusen, who has made a careful analysis of the RVOG ecumenical relations during the first five years of its history, has pointed out that in spite of many set-backs, it was a unique and successful experience in Christian broadcasting. "The significance of this ecumenical experiment", he says, "lies in the fact that a new pattern was tried, which had never been attempted before in international broadcasting." (Van Deusen, 1968:402),

Professor Niels Peter Moritzen is also summing up his assessment in a similar way when he writes: "The unequal partners not only came together, but they stayed together and ploughed a good piece of new land together." (Christoph Jahn, 1973:18).

2.3.7. Government Relations

For reasons mentioned earlier, the Ethiopian Government had from the outset of the radio project basically a favourable attitude towards it. This was particularly reflected in generous economic concessions on the part of the Government. LWF/BS was granted three years of duty-free import of building material and technical equipment. Expatriate personnel was exempted from income taxes for an unlimited period of time. The same positive attitude was reflected in the exemption from pre-broadcast screening of all programs, both those produced in Ethiopia and those received from the area studios. (Government agreement, Art. XV). At the same time, the Government had to safeguard its authority over the activities within its territory and had the right to do so. The operation of the station was made "subject to the laws and regulations of the Imperial Ethiopian Government and to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Ethiopia." The Government also reserved the right to use the station in case of national emergency. (Government agreement, Art. XIV and XXIV). Certain limitations were also built into the freedom with regard to the right to determine the type and content of programs which originated from RVOG. Those limitations were defined in the following six points:

"No program originating from the Federation's radio station shall:

1. involve the station in political questions;
2. constitute an attack on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church;
3. constitute an attack upon any organized church, mission or body;
4. attack or deny the evangelical Christian faith;
5. contradict generally accepted codes of Christian morality;
6. involve in commercial advertising. (Ibid Art. IX)."

Instead of pre-broadcast screening of programs, which was totally unacceptable to LWF, the Government required that all broadcasts should be recorded and kept for one month "at the disposal of the Government for its inspection and review, without deletion or erasure." (Ibid Art. XI). The Government was particularly keen on keeping certain control over the domestic broadcasts. The Ministry of Information, which was the Government agency responsible for public media and their use, required, therefore, from the

beginning, an arrangement whereby the interests and policies of the Government vis-à-vis the public in Ethiopia would be safeguarded.

After long negotiations, a "Protocol of Agreement" was signed on March 28th, 1963, between the Ministry of Information and the LWF/BS. The first paragraph of this document spelt out an arrangement which apparently was a compromise between what the Ministry demanded and what RVOG could accept. This arrangement implied that an Officer of the Ministry of Information should be detailed to assist the Amharic news section at RVOG. That person should give advice concerning news in Amharic for Ethiopia. The rest of the document dealt with collaboration in exchange of program material and training of radio workers.

This arrangement,which by some critical observers has been classified as a hidden censorship, did in fact serve the interests not only of the Ministry of Information but also that of the station as long as the functions of the Liaison Officer were kept within the limits of the agreement. The station had, in this document, upheld its integrity by retaining the right to make final decisions on what should be broadcast. At the same time, the procedures agreed upon served as a protection against factual errors and unnecessary editorial mistakes in the domestic service. It also served the interests of the Government by giving access in advance to broadcast material at RVOG. Even if the Liaison Officer was not in the position to give instructions to the RVOG staff as to what they should use and not use, his advice had to be taken seriously. To ignore or go against what he suggested was to take a calculated risk of being accused of violating agreements. If possible, disagreements had to be settled before such a decision was taken.

In order to maintain the best possible relations with the authorities, the station had established the position of a special Advisor on Government and Church Affairs. Ato Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie, who held that position from May 1962 throughout the whole operational period of RVOG, played an important role in the daily dealings with the Liaison Officer and other government officials. His service contributed greatly to avoiding misunderstandings and to resolving them when they occurred.

With the exception of a few incidents, government relations were cordial for almost four years after the opening of RVOG. Government agencies respected the integrity of the station. One example of that was when the country in

1964 was in a boarder conflict with Somalia and was in need of short wave facilities for special news casts. RVOG was not ready to make available its facilities for government transmissions, but offered "to add to its normal news operation special news casts in English, Amharic and Swahili in the interest of dissemination of factual news." This offer was accepted by the Ministry of Information and it was agreed that the news casts should be edited and voiced by RVOG staff. To avoid any misunderstanding, the station did not accept payment from the Government for this service. (LWF/BS.B.a. 1964:4).

In 1967, H.E. Blatta Girmatchew Teklehawariat was replaced by Dr. Minasse Haile as Minister of Information. With this appointment a sudden deterioration of government relations began, with demans for tight control of station activities. Although his attitude and actions had to do with his own personality, it is not possible to say that he represented only himself. He was the official spokesman for the Government and he had behind him the group of high officials who had been against the establishment of RVOG. He was also a faithful Orthodox church member and represented the church leaders, who were alarmed by the impact of RVOG and the rapid growth of the Protestant churches in the country. In January 1968 he wrote an official letter to the RVOG Director, Revd. Paul Volz, and demanded full control of domestic and international newscasts at RVOG as well as religious programming for Ethiopia.

Negotiations were immediately taken up with the Minister and this resulted in a second "Protocol of Agreement" which was signed on January 27, 1968. This document was again a compromise between government demands and station resistance to control. It was now agreed that news items originating in Ethiopia and concerning the policy of Ethiopia should come through the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA). All other news of this nature could be broadcast only after advice had been received from the Liaison Officer. It was further said that "the activities of the Liaison Officer should be extended to assist and advise on all international news concerning Ethiopia or adversely affecting the policy of the Ethiopian Government." All news should be reported without comment. With regard to other domestic broadcasts, it was agreed that new program titles and formats or substantial changes of old program formats for broadcasts to Ethiopia should be submitted for approval by the Ministry prior to their inauguration. (Second Protocol of Agreement).

There seems to have been at least one tangible reason for the sudden actions taken by the Ministry of Information. RVOG had been reporting on student revolts in Europe and the United States and similar unrest had at the same time occurred among students in Ethiopia. The conclusion was drawn that there was a connection. RVOG was accused of inspiring violence.

The new "Protocol of Agreement" did not give the result which the Minister of Information had desired. In March the same year,he therefore threatened to impose full censorship on RVOG, claiming that the law of the country superseded contractual agreements. (Report on file in Geneva Archives). As of that time, the Liaison Officer was permanently assigned to RVOG and was instructed to exercise control in accordance with the agreement signed. To avoid confusion and unnecessary friction, the RVOG Director thenruled that the Liaison Officer should deal directly with him and not with editors and producers. (Internal Memo, June 13, 1968).

Since the problem mainly had to do with broadcasts to Ethiopia, and the basic policy of RVOG was that the local churches should be responsible for programming totheir areas, negotiations were initiated with the Mekane Yesus Church (EECMY) regarding the possibility that this church should assume the responsibility for domestic programming.An agreement to this effect was signed on October 8th, 1968. In accordance with that agreement, the church took over the Amharic programming, while English and French programs inteded for Ethiopia, should continue to be produced at the station.

In January 1969, Dr. Minasse Haile was replaced by Ato Meba Silassie Alemu and relations with the Ministry of Information began to improve. On the 26th of February that year, the sixth anniversary of RVOG was observed by Ethiopian Herald which devoted a full page to a report on the station and its important ministry. From that time, the RVOG broadcast schedules were also printed free of charge and a year of great tension was ended. The following year, Dr. Aske reported that relations with the Government had been "effective and good, which is essential but should not be taken for granted." (LWF/BS.B.a.1971). The next year was also peaceful. The Station Director, Rev'd Bauerochse, reported that government relations had been very friendly and that the Emperor had "on several occasions expressed appreciation of the Amharic programs and even urged the station to have them printed," he said. (LWF/BS.B.a.1972).

After that, relationships began to deteriorate again. Political unrest among university students and other segments of the society increased. An RVOG freelancer of indian nationality was served a deportation order, accused of involvement in illegal and anti-government activities.One of the English news editors was interrogated because of anti-government publicity. Following that, he offered his resignation.

From 1973 nothing is reported about government relations. In spite of the fact that the Emperor honoured the station by attending the tenth anniversary on February 26th, nothing is mentioned about it in the annual report. The whole situation was so fluid that it was impossible to know what was going on. RVOG was this year also repeatedly told to keep away from reporting on social issues like famine and drought, in spite of the fact that big areas in the country suffered from these. When RVOG continued to deal with these issues in both actual reporting and in Bible meditations, Government officials threatened to close down the station. Bauerochse, who was RVOG Director at that time, was on several occasions told that unless he was more careful, the Government would have to take measures to check the station or close it down. Developments in the following years of revolutionary changes in the country and the RVOG relations to the Military Government, which took power in September 1974, shall be taken up later. As an international broadcasting institution, RVOG had also occasionally to deal with governments in the target areas. It was mainly the news service which caused reactions on that level. It should, however, take us too far and even be impossible to review and evaluate these reactions. We shall therefore only mention a few examples of negative as well as positive reactions. We have already mentioned how the sensitive political situation in the Middle East led to discontinuation of the news service in Arabic in 1965. The records do not indicate that there were any official reactions from the governments in the area, but the fear of reprisals and the wish to maintain friendly relations made the churches take the decision to stop the RVOG news in the Arabic language.

During the civil war in Nigeria 1967-1970, RVOG was under heavy attacks from the government in Lagos because of the reporting on Biafra. Dr. Aske said to the LWF/BS Board 1971 "In this era of liberation movements and civil wars, RVOG has been accused of lending support to rebel activities. The station has been renamed 'The Voice of the Devil' and station leadership has been called various and sundry less than flattering names."

In the following year during a boarder conflict between Tanzania and Uganda, RVOG was accused of bias reporting. The issue was even discussed in Parliament and RVOG received an official complaint through the Tanzanian Embassy in Addis Ababa. (LWF/BS.B.a.1973, Report 5.0).

These incidents are only examples of what frequently happened when RVOG news reporting was disliked by a government in the service area. Apart from the substance of the news item, the vocabulary and choice of words caused reactions. To call a group "freedom fighters" or "rebels" was immediately interpreted as a political stand of the station in a given conflict. In spite of these and many more negative reactions, RVOG had in general a reputation of reliability and objectivity. At an international conference on rural development in Africa, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Dr. Robert Gardiner, called attention to the important role which radio played in rural development. In that connection, he suggested that RVOG should be called upon to cooperate with ECA in the area of rural development. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1972: Exh.E.2).

When the UN Security Council met in Addis Ababa in January 1972, RVOG was asked to give "a blanket coverage" of the meeting, which also was done. (LWF/BS.B.a.1973:report 5.1).

The same year it is also reported that Major General Joseph Lagu, Commander in Chief of the Anyanya forces in southern Sudan, sent his "cease-fire message" to the troops over RVOG after the peace agreement was signed in Addis Ababa. He said that he wanted to use RVOG because this was the station which his people listened to and trusted most. (LWF/BS.B.a.1973: report 5.0).

Regular cooperation with the United Nations and the Organization for Africa Unity developed in the following years to the point where official agreements for cooperation were negoted.

2.3.8. Station Facilities

At the annual meeting of the Board in July 1963, it was reported that the initial construction stage of the station facilities was completed. (LWF/BS. B.m.1963:6). This did not, however, mean that no more funds would be needed for technical hardware and building facilities. At no time in the history of RVOG could it be said that building construction and technical installations were completed.

Expansion

At the same Board meeting as it was reported that the initial construction stage was completed, a new request for building of four additional housing units was approved. (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:15). In the course of the same year, extension of the administration building was also approved as a matter of urgency. (LWF/BS.EC.1964:4). It was also soon discovered that more broadcast time was needed than could be made available with a one-shift operation of two shortwave transmitters. A study was therefore undertaken with the aim of finding a solution to this problem. There were two alternatives. One was to add another transmitter and the other to add another shift, which would mean employing more people.

It was clear that a third transmitter would give more flexibility and increase the capacity of the station to use the best listening hours of the day. A two-shift operation with existing transmitters would give the double amount of broadcast time, but at less convenient hours. In view of the capital costs involved and in the interest of making the best use of facilities already available, it was decided to opt for the second alternative and start a two-shift operation as soon as possible. (LWF/BS.B.m.1964:7 and 1965:6). This, however, required not only more staff but also a dormitory building at the transmitter station. This building was constructed in 1966/67. (LWF/BS.B.a. 1968:Exh.C). In 1970 two requests for improvement of station facilities were approved. One had to do with water supply at the transmitter station. shortage of clean water had been a problem all the time. With a two-shift operation it became even more urgent to find a solution. The small villages in the area were in the same situation and had to draw water from far away when the dug water holes were dry.

It was therefore decided to make this a community development project, which could serve villagers as well as the station crew. Funds were made available the same year through the LWF Community Development Service. Due to a number of unforeseen difficulties, a productive well was not struck by the water drilling team until 1975. Until that time, clean water for the transmitter crew had to be transported from the main station.

The other improvement had to do with catering facilities for the local staff. Transport to and from the city was a problem because satisfactory public transportwas not readily available. The only way of bringing local employees

to work and back home was for the station to provide transport. A cafeteria on the campus would reduce these trips with station vehicles to morning and evening. The request for funds to build a cafeteria was approved in 1970 and the building was ready for the time when RVOG celebrated its tenth anniversary in February 1973. (LWF/BS.B.a.1974).

In 1970 the Department of Audience Research and Planning was established. At the following Board Meeting, the RVOG Director reported that with this new department, both office space and housing on the campus were insufficient. The station was at that time in a very difficult financial situation and the Board could therefore not consider another capital investment at that time. The following year (1972), the requests were approved in principle. In the meantime, the necessary funds had been assured by a donor agency and, after the plans had been finally approved by the Board in February 1973, construction of the new office wing started the same year. In mid-1974 it was ready and the problem regarding office space was resolved in a most satisfactory way. At that time, the political upheaval in the country made it necessary to postpone further building activities and the four staff residences which also had been approved, were never built.

Maintenance

Apart from regular maintenance, which was covered by the annual operation budget, there were three major upkeep problems which turned up in the 1970's and required more investments. The sewage system for the residential area at the main station had caused serious problems for some time. Attempts to resolve these problems through normal maintenance had failed. The building consultant suggested therefore a complete reconstruction of the whole system. This was a major and expensive undertaking, but had to be done. Funds were made available from the depreciation fund and the work was completed in 1975.

The second major problem had to do with the age of the transmitters. The question of replacement had already been raised in 1971 and 1972. The type of transmitters which RVOG had was at that time out of production and it became more and more difficult to get necessary spare-parts. The cost for those had also increased around 300% because they had to be manufactured outside the regular production and the long delivery time made operation insecure.

At the 1973 Board meeting, it was decided that a master plan should be worked out for the entire technical outfit. Based on findings and recommendations which a special "Working Group" presented at that time, it was assumed that shortwave broadcasting would continue to be needed in Africa and Asia for another decade or two. At the same time, technological developments in general called for a complete replanning. Stress was placed on flexibility in the use of existing facilities and it was said that up-grading of transmitter strength should not be seen as an institutional design, but should be viewed as a means to accomplish the mission of the church and as the best possible of several options. It was decided to postpone up-grading and renewing of technical equipment at RVOG until the master plan had been considered. (LWF/BS.B.m.1973:4-5). To cope with the maintenance problem, in the meantime, the Board made available an amount of 250.000 US dollars for this purpose to be distributed over the next few years.

The third problem with regard to station facilities, occurred in 1975, when the foundation under one of the transmitters suddenly began to crack. It was assumed that an earth tremor in the area had initiated movements in the ground which continued. Construction experts recommended that immediate measures be taken in order to avoid serious damage to the transmitter itself. To everyone's relief, it was possible to repair and reinforce the foundation without taking the transmitters out of operation and without too high costs.

By the end of the period the total capital investment, including original construction and installation, additional office and housing facilities as well as major repair, had reached the amount of US$ 2,4 million. In return, 90.037 hours of shortwave and 27.264 hours of medium wave transmissions had been beamed over the RVOG antennas with less than 0,01% loss of airtime due to technical faults and power failure.

PART THREE

THE RADIO MINISTRY

THE RADIO MINISTRY

So far our narration of the RVOG story has mainly dealt with the broadcasting institution in Addis Ababa - its planning, implementation and operation. We have seen how the original "vision" of Dr. Birkeli was turned into reality - how its organizational and administrative structures were formed in rational planning, and how circumstances led the project into a broad ecumenical partnership.

More important, and also more complex than that, is, however, the radio ministry itself. It is here that the crucial and critical questions about objectives and how they were pursued have to be asked. Here we are also faced with questions about the local churches and their role in the project. We also need to look at program production and how it developed over the years. Not least important are questions which have to do with the listeners and their response, and the interplay between broadcasters and their audiences. Finally we shall also look at the question of how RVOG understood its role vis-à-vis the local churches and the society at large.

In this section of the RVOG story we shall deal with these aspects and try to relate the actual developments to the original concepts and objectives.

3.1. Objectives and Broadcast Strategy

RVOG was, in a sense, a community development project. The original idea was to make modern technology available to the local churches in Asia, the Middle East and Africa with the aim of initiating a development towards a meaningful use of modern communication media in their ministry and mission. The idea was not only to provide them with a broadcasting facility but also to equip them for the time when they might have regular access to local radio networks. This concept and aim make the radio ministry go beyond the broadcasting institution in Addis Ababa.

A dilemma which RVOG shared with many development projects at the time was that the role its leadership actually had to play, in order to get the project off the ground, was not always commensurate with the basic intention. Obvious circumstances made it necessary for RVOG to take initiatives and to assume responsibilities which made the station appear as the main operator and the local church involvement was subsequently

late in commencing and slow in developing. It is here that some critical questions have to be asked about the RVOG understanding of its role vis-à-vis the local churches and the society at large.

3.1.1. Basic Objectives and Their Interpretation

It should be recalled that it was in the context of world evangelization and the missionary obligation of the Church that the radio project was conceived and planned. The basic objectives of its ministry were also defined within that context, which the following statement on "Purpose and Policy" adopted and authorized in 1959, shows:

"1. To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, as the only means of salvation, to the widest possible audience.
2. To strengthen the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programs that nurture believers in their Christian faith, and to keep the challenge and responsibility of evangelism constantly before the churches.
3. To promote education and culture through the broadcast of educational and cultural programs.
4. To assist the churches in follow-up work.
5. To train radio workers."

(LWF/CWM.m.1959.19)

This statement which remained unchanged throughout the whole operation period reflects the theological stance and specific character of this radio ministry. RVOG had no doctrinal statement which obviously had to do with its role conception and with the fact that it belonged in a confessional world body. A doctrinal statement was in this situation unnecessary and irrelevent. The defined objectives and a number of official statements over the years have, however, given the RVOG radio ministry a theological profile.

The RVOG Theological Position

In his dissertation "Effectiveness of Radio Voice of the Gospel as a Form of Christian Mission", Lee Ruud raises the question of what the RVOG theological position actually was as it went into operation. His analysis leads him to the assessment that proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was considered to be "a central mandate" and that there were other "supportive and supplementive theological concerns expressed indirectly in policies and directly in personal statements by RVOG leaders as the

years went on". His conclusion is that the RVOG theological position as expressed in those policies and statements, was based on the following four assumptions:

- The ultimate authority of Scriptures.
- The Gospel is the only means of salvation.
- The Gospel is relevant to all people.
- The Gospel speaks to the whole person.

He points out that these assumptions make it clear that the RVOG ministry was squarely based on the Reformation's formal principle - "Sola Scriptura". The assumptions also indicate, according to Ruud, that RVOG appeared to represent a rather conservative theology of mission, but that it at the same time carried a broad understanding of the terms "Gospel" and "salvation". (Ruud, op.cit.pp.11-28).

There is no question that proclamation of the Gospel was considered the prime objective of RVOG. In 1959 Aske had already made it clear that "the LWF radio station will first and foremost proclaim the Christian message", and he went on saying: "It may seem unnecessary in the church of the Reformation to ask what is meant by the term "Christian message". Some do it anyway. To such I reply: Whether a message is Christian or not will have to be tested by the formal principle, "Sola Scriptura". It must be a biblical message, endeavouring to make the person and the work of Jesus Christ as central as we find them revealed in the Scriptures. A more important message we cannot proclaim. A less important we dare not." (Lutheran World No.1.1959:57). Faithfulness to the revealed truth in Scriptures was considered the basic broadcast criterion. A year after the opening of the station, Aske said: "No presentation of majority opinion can be a substitute for proclamation of the Gospel. The broadcast criterion remains constantly faithfulness to the revealed truth in Christ and not success." (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:10). This "central mandate" and guiding principle was also reflected in the name of the station and its motto.+)

+) Name: Radio Voice of the Gospel
Motto: Proclaiming Christ to His World

When Ruud suggests that RVOG represented a rather conservative theology of mission, he does that with some hesitation. His further analysis, which showed that RVOG stood for a rather broad understanding of the terms "Gospel" and "salvation", made the classification "conservative" somewhat inadequate or at least required explanation. Ruud is aware of this. The stated conviction that "the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation" made RVOG appear to represent a conservative theology of mission in the sense that it was squarely based on "the ultimate authority of Scriptures".

The understanding of the Gospel as a message which had to do with all aspects of life, as well as concern for global and social justice and human rights which RVOG stood for, made it neither identify with the so-called "Conservative Evangelicals" nor with the theology of mission which the World Council of Churches advanced in the 1960's. When Aske in 1969 talked about the theological position of RVOG in its programming, he said that it should be catalogued somewhere inbetween the two. (LWF/EC.a.1969: Aske's report p.3).

It is certainly appropriate to say that the RVOG radio ministry was from the beginning based on a conservative, biblical theology of mission and had at the same time adopted a more contemporary, holistic interpretation of the Gospel. It was the combination of these two fundamental principles which made up the RVOG theological profile and characterized its programming. One of the most significant expressions of this understanding of its position and its role, is the so-called "30-70 formula" which was established from the beginning as a guideline for programming. This formula was a suggestion to all program suppliers that 30 per cent of the broadcast time allotted to them should be used for evangelistic and devotional programs, while 70 per cent of the time should be used for educational, cultural and developmental programs.

The social dimension of the RVOG ministry was further emphasized, when it was made clear that not only should the local churches have access to the broadcasting facilities, but also UNESCO and other international organizations. Aske said: "The station will attempt to serve the nations." (LWF/BS.B.a.1962). The station was also later regularly co-operating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and other United Nation agencies

as well as the Organization for African Unity (OAU). All this was in line with the broad interpretation of the Gospel which the LWF President, Franklin Clark Fry, had talked about at the inauguration of the station in February 1963. (cf.supra p.92).

Considering all this, the Finnish media researcher, Allan Franzén, describes RVOG as a "complex variable" of Christian radio stations, in his book "Evangelium i Etern". Referring to the broad understanding of the Christian message which RVOG had, he says: "The RVOG broadcasting ministry would have been considered incomplete unless it catered to spiritual as well as material needs in congregational as well as in community fellowship". (Franzén, 1979:260-261).

Changing Emphasis in Pursuing Defined Objectives

With the above-mentioned understanding of its ministry, RVOG focused in on different areas of concern at different times. To begin with it was perhaps natural to give special attention to the local churches, their needs and opportunities in mission. In the planning period of the radio project, it had repeatedly been said that the role of RVOG was to serve the churches. This had a double meaning: On the one hand, RVOG was there to provide a broadcasting facility which the churches could make use of. On the other hand, RVOG was also there to assist the churches, to guide and strengthen them.

The danger in focusing too much on the churches was that the whole operation would be reduced to an introverted service, and the missionary purpose to reach non-Christians and serve the society at large would be defeated. Analyses of programs from the early years of operation also show that this was the tendency. The leadership of the station was also aware of this danger. Aske pointed out that the station should not be allowed "to degenerate into an extremely expensive international Christian house-telephone." (LWF/BS Report to the LWF Assembly 1963:24).

In the second half of the 1960's, attention shifted gradually towards the society and the world at large. The debate which preceded the WCC Assembly at Uppsala in 1968 contributed obviously to the new awareness of the contemporary global and social problems. At the end of the decade we note

a definite shift in the broadcasting ministry. It had earlier been pointed out that "Christian radio must be true to life." (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:9). Aske referred to that in 1969 and said that programs which were developmental in nature and produced under a Christian perspective were "strikingly relevant to life and development help of the highest degree". (LWF/BS.B.a. 1969:Exh.II.A8). It was also the same year that RVOG for the first time applied for funds from the established church-related development agencies in Europe.

Being aware of the shift in the pursuance of the radio ministry which was taking place, Aske was prompted to conclude his above-mentioned report by saying: "I see a call to:

- remain alert as to objectives
- steadfast in purpose
- faithful to message and mission
- flexible in methods and
- generally imaginative in operation.

We are a church for others ...,

We are sent into the world by Jesus Christ".

In 1971 Aske warned against drifting away from the basic objectives and said: "Development is today a first-page term and topic, but unless the Church is able to give the term a distinct Christian interpretation, the Church again becomes a vague echo of secular voices." (LWF/BS.B.a. 1971:6). Concern for community development continued to mark the radio ministry in the following years. Reports and agendas from this time reflect this concern. The 1973 Studio Directors' Conference was, for example, devoted to discussion of the topic "Development and Christian Broadcasting". Special efforts were made at that conference to develop methods for meaningful radio programming to support the churches in their community development work.

From this broad approach to global and social questions, the radio ministry gradually narrowed down to a concern for the actual listeners and their needs. There were several factors which worked together and brought about this shift of emphasis, whereby the actual audience was put into focus. The development debate itself contributed to this shift. Developments in the understanding of radio as a medium of communication - its possibilities and limitations - also played a role in this change

of emphasis. Not least important was the arrival of the new Audience Relations Officer, Bernhardur Gudmundsson, in 1973. Through his initiatives and systematic efforts, the audience relations aspect of the radio ministry was lifted up.

With this brief outline of the RVOC theological position, the objectives and their interpretation, as well as how the objectives were pursued, we shall leave these important questions for the time being and come back to them later in their appropriate context.

Before we now turn to programming and related questions, we shall, as a background, briefly take up two crucial aspects of the radio ministry, namely the involvement of the local churches and the broadcast strategy during the operation period and the various issues related to the planning.

3.1.2. Station/Studio Relations and Church Involvement

Among the original principles which determined the structures and operation of the radio project, local church involvement was probably the most fundamental. The important thing in this connection is, however, not <u>that</u> the local churches were involved but <u>how</u> and to what extent.

The Original Concept

The role which the local churches were to play in the RVOC ministry was fundamental because it had to do with the authenticity of the broadcast message. Here we think of the churches as active participants in the radio ministry and not only as listeners. They were to be the main operators. It was said in 1959:"From the very start, the aim will be to make both personnel and programs as indigenous as possible in the hope of strengthening the life and activities of the local churches. (Aske: Lutheran World, June 1959:57). A year later, Aske was even more specific when he said: "The station will be a servant of the churches. It will attempt to do what the churches want it to do." (Lutheran World, March 1960:416). As the station was getting ready, Aske spelt out in more detail the function of RVOC vis-à-vis the churches and said: "It will not be an independent missionary operation .... There will be no preaching by remote control. Rather the programs will be a proclamation of the Christian message with a local application." (LWF/BS.EC.a. 1962:report p.3).

These and other statements make it abundantly clear that the local churches were expected to play a key role in the radio ministry. The establishment of local production studios, which we have dealt with in an earlier section, was the most important structural adaptation to the principle of local church involvement. The fact that it was the local churches themselves which should build and run the recording facilities made it also clear that they were considered to be an integral part of the churches' ministry and that the studio staff should, in the first place, relate to their churches.

In addition to production of programs, the churches were also expected to assume the responsibility for the important follow-up ministry. The Board took the initiative to prepare a plan for this which was suggested to the churches. (LWF/BS.B.m.1961:5). All these arrangements were, as far as theory goes, in line with the basic principle in communication science, namely that true and effective communication begins in the local community. To put this theory into practice and make RVOG a servant of the local churches was not so easy.There were a number of inbuilt problems in the project from the beginning and others developed as the operation went on.

Inbuilt Problems

As an established broadcasting institution, registered and recognized as such, RVOG had assumed legal and professional responsibilities which it could not run away from, nor share with the local churches. In accordance with the contract signed with the Ethiopian Government, RVOG would be held responsible for broadcast content. Violation of the stipulated rules and regulations would result in legal action agains the station. The professional reputation of the station also required a certain control of program content and quality.

This was no surprise to the RVOG leadership. In the "Statement of Purpose and Policy", precautions were taken to protect the station. The right to accept, reject or edit any program submitted for broadcasting had been reserved. (LWF/CWM.a.1959:Exh.C.3). At the same time as these precautions were both obvious and necessary under existing circumstances, they had also a retarding effect on the indigenization of the radio ministry. They constituted a contradiction in the very concept of the role which the

churches were expected to play - a contradiction which was not so easily handled.

How this inbuilt problem should be resolved in the best possible way was discussed on several occasions during the planning and implementation stages of the project and continued to be discussed throughout the whole period of operation. Another inbuilt problem was the initial arrangements which had to be made to get the project off the ground without too much delay. Due to shortage of qualified nationals, the initiative to establish the studios was usually taken by foreign missionaries. Special funds were made available by overseas mission boards and the studios which were intended to be an integral part of the churches' ministry were, from the beginning, generally seen as an extra-church activity. Even if some of the church leaders were personally involved in administrative and policy-making capacities, the church leadership at large remained disengaged and felt that there were others who carried the responsibility for the radio project.

A third problem which also was inherent in the studio operation had to do with finances. In order to get qualified, professional staff, it was necessary to go beyond regular church salary-scales. At the same time it was not possible to afford the same salaries as media workers in the public or commercial sector were offered. This created two problems. On the one hand there was a temptation for those who had the proficiency and some experience, to leave the studio when they had an opportunity to get a better paid job. For this reason many studios had a high turn-over of staff and were often left with inexperienced personnel. The other problem was within the church, where some felt that the radio work was too expensive. An example of this was the situation in one of the service areas in India, from where it was reported that the cost for production of a 30-minute daily radio program in a year was equal to support of 40 full-time pastors in the church for the same period of time. At the same time as these problems created a distance between the local radio studio and the church, there was also a certain satisfaction with things as they were. Some media people said: "You are most likely not going to be successful in your media work, if you involve the church too much". From the church side it was heard that the church had better stay out of the radio work because it was such a specialized field. There were

also those who felt that "radio might be used more effectively for Christian witness and nation-building, without being identified with the local church". (Lundgren, Travel report from West Africa, 1971).

The fact that there was a certain distance between the churches and the local studios did not mean that the churches were indifferent to the radio work. There was much appreciation of what was done. The only thing was that the role of the churches was reduced to mere passive "media consumers" instead of "operators". This also had another negative side-effect, namely that RVOG was considered enough. It was generally felt that there was no need to explore other possibilities to make use of modern media. Considering all these inbuilt problems and reactions, we begin to realize why church involvement stayed at such a low level for such a long time.

Actual Developments

The practical implications of the first problem we have mentioned above, namely the control of programs and the final say with regard to what should be broadcast, seem not to have been discussed until the contract with the Ethiopia Government was signed. It was in 1962 that the dilemma to protect the station and at the same time uphold the integrity of the churches in program production was taken up and discussed.

The new Program Director, Ulrich Fick, suggested that the churches and their studios should be given full freedom in program planning and production, and that programs should only be checked for factuality and technical quality. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:7). Fick's suggestion was generally accepted, but it was also realized that to do this constructively, a well qualified Broadcast Editor was needed.

The Broadcast Editor position was approved the following year. It was pointed out at that time that "broadcast editing fulfilled certain franchise requirements and observed program trends which warranted special praise or attention."

In his report on program developments 1963/64, Fick explained broadcast editing in the following way: "It is upto the studios to decide how the Voice of the Gospel shall "sound" in their country. Station editing can only cut obvious mistakes and eliminate programs which are entirely out of context. Station analysis also opens the way for discussion on program

matters which may prove to be fruitful over a period of years". (IWF/BS.B.a. 1964:Report).

These explanations did not, however, avert tension over the issue as such. Robert Van Deusen observes that "this caused irritation and resentment on the part of studio staff and their constituencies". He also refers to the fact that CCIB felt very strongly that the studios should be free to make decisions regarding the ethical, estetic and theological factors in their programming. CCIB had also warned the station "not to exercise a degree of control over programs which would violate the integrity of the studios in relation to their church constituencies". (Van Deusen, op.cit.p.379).

In general the broadcast editing procedures functioned satisfactorily but were seen as a problem which both the station and the studios had to live with. Neither party was happy about it. At the same time, there is no question that broadcast editing also had positive effects. Comments and suggestions made by the Broadcast Editor from time to time served a purpose and helped the studios improve their program production.

After almost ten years it was, however, felt that the time had come when this procedure had to be radically reviewed. There were two main reasons for this. One was that the required translations of program scripts were a heavy burden on the studios. +) The other reason was that most of the studio leadership had so much experience that control of their program production was no longer needed and was increasingly felt as a prevailing paternalism.

In consultation with the Studio Directors, it was agreed in 1972 that they should, on behalf of the station, assume the responsibilities both for the "franchise requirements" and for the professional standard of the programming. Each Studio Director also signed a document to this effect.

At the same time both sides were anxious to have an ongoing dialogue on the programming. It was therefore also agreed that the Broadcast Editor at the station should take one studio at the time and study their programs in depth over a few weeks. These analyses should then be discussed with the program people in training workshops and consultations.

+) For broadcast editing of programs in the various local languages, English or French translations of the program scripts were required.

Both the RVOG Director, Ernst Bauerochse, and the Acting Program Director, Michael Blair, mention this rearrangement as a positive development in their annual reports 1972.

The shortage of qualified national staff was another problem which also delayed the indigenization process of the area studios. As we have indicated earlier, this was not only a question of training which in itself was an enormous task. It had to a large extent to do with finances. Shortage of funds made it often necessary to use seconded missionary personnel which did not need studio budgeting. Together with a frequent dropout of qualified national staff, due to opportunities to get better paid jobs, this problem slowed down the process of indigenization of program production in many of the areas. There was, however, a steady improvement also in this respect, as we shall see in the following.

Limited finances had not only negative effects on the building-up of a qualified national staff. For financial reasons, the producers had only limited possibilities to travel and to make recording trips or cover important events in their area. Many studios had also limited library resources. All this contributed to a program production with relatively small resources. Only gradually could this be improved.

If we now look back over the years and ask if the radio project was able to achieve its objectives with regard to church involvement, the answer must be that the envisaged level of participation was never reached and the local churches never fully played the role they were expected to play to begin with. We have tried to explain some of the main reasons for this, but it should perhaps also be mentioned that the expectations in this respect were too high. The local churches were expected to do too much too soon and without being adequately motivated for an active participation in the radio ministry.

The RVOG leadership became, however, more and more concerned about the situation. In 1967 the question was discussed on several occasions. Aske reported to the Board that the Studio Directors' Conference that year had expressed concern over the weak backing they had from the churches. Aske said that the Studio Directors were agreed that this matter was so important that it should be listed for thorough treatment at the next conference. (LWF/BS.B.a.1967: Report p.9).

In 1969 the Program Director, Jon Egil Ofstad, again called attention to this matter and said that the local staff needed criticism and encouragement, but it was even more important that they got "the feeling that they were working for the church and were looked upon as fellow workers in the task of reaching the many who were not so easily reached by church organizations". (LWF/BS.B.a.1969:Exh.C:2).

The experience over the years showed that the structural integration of the local churches into the RVOG project was no guarantee in itself of an active and effective partnership in the radio ministry. Knud Joergensen has also pointed out that structural integration of local churches into a media project without a simultaneous conceptual integration may be counter-productive. (Joergensen, op.cit.p.224).

The point which Joergensen makes is important and it can perhaps be said that an awareness-building of the local churches at all levels should have been undertaken at the same time as the churches were structurally integrated into the RVOG project.

At the same time it should be remembered that there were circumstances which made it difficult to do that. Most of the local churches were in a transitional period in their ministry. They were preoccupied with relationships to their overseas mission boards and the setting up of their own administration at the time when the radio project was launched. To get the project off the ground without too much delay, it was natural that structural and professional questions were given priority and it was certainly hoped that the motivation for active participation should grow as the project began to function.

Even if this was a miscalculation and we have to admit that church involvement never reached the intended level, it would also be unfair to say that nothing happened. It took more time and did not follow the original blueprints, but there was a development towards an understanding of their role in media communication, and RVOC was instrumental in this development.

Robert Van Deusen observes that already prior to 1968 there was "a satisfaction felt among nationals in being able to participate in a large-scale program that was for the benefit of their people, and that

this added a measure of wholesome self-respect." (Van Deusen, op.cit.p.358). There were also clear indications that many of the local churches were, through their participation in RVOG, taken out of their relative isolation. Their image was built up in society. They were also in many cases brought into a new international, intercultural and ecumenical fellowship which meant new perspectives in their whole ministry.

Even if church involvement was late in commencing and slow in developing, the radio project had, nevertheless, initiated a process which was taking them out of their isolation and introvertedness. This process took its time, but the efforts made were not in vain.

3.1.3. Broadcast Strategy and Planning

When the term "strategy" is used here for planning of the RVOG broadcasting ministry, it has no connotation of cultural or clerical imperialism. RVOG had no intention of building its own "empire". The term "strategy" has in the first place to do with stewardship and the most effective use of resources and facilities available. The concern which the leadership of the station had all the time was how those expensive facilities should be used in the most effective way and how the objectives of the project should be achieved without wasting time. It seems as though the most significant strategy discussions took place in the early years of the operation and in the 1970's. In the first years of operation the questions discussed mainly centred around language policies and air-time distribution, while in the 1970's more principle questions about media communication were in the foreground. There were four main issues which all the time were under consideration, individually and interrelatedly.

Broadcast Targets

There seem to have been basically three factors which together determined the broadcast targets:

- The ongoing missionary work in Asia and Africa where LWF member churches in Europe and the United States were traditionally engaged;
- The willingness and capability of the LWF member churches in Asia and Africa to assume program production and follow-up responsibilities;
- The ongoing church and mission work which the RVOG ecumenical partners were involved in and desired assistance for by the station.

We are here using the term "broadcast target" both for the broad geographical

areas which RVOG was technically designed to cover and for the selected areas within this coverage. The first had to be determined prior to the design of the antenna structure, while the latter was subject to review from time to time, as opportunities and needs presented themselves and as resources allowed.

In August 1961 the following definition of target areas was presented to the Board: "The antenna system, now under construction, presupposes a number of defined target areas mutually agreed upon by the LWF Broadcasting Service, the NECC and the Lutheran Hour. The LWF target areas cover all Lutheran churches in Africa and to a large extent Lutheran churches in Asia (Japan and Formosa not included)." (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:6).

Already a year later the requests for air-time were so many that a priority order between and within the defined targets had to be set. This was done after a long discussion at a joint meeting in Beirut in early 1964. It was agreed that the Near East and Asia should share half of available broadcast time and African churches should use the other half. (Joint Meeting, Jan. 1964:11). To facilitate a proper screening of requests for air-time, a detailed set of "criteria for total RVOG strategy" was prepared by the RVOG Audience Relations Officer, Paul Volz, and presented to the Board in August 1964. (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:Exh.2.B.). This proposal resulted in a set of criteria which should guide the procedures for determining broadcast areas within the established structure. (LWF/BS.B.m. 1964:19).

In the following years, a number of other areas which technically could be accommodated within the antenna coverage were considered. Broadcasts to China were approved in 1967 and the following year test broadcasts to Latin America were carried out. Transmissions to China were initiated the following year, but broadcasts to Latin America were dropped for various reasons. In 1972 area priorities were reviewed again and it was agreed with the ecumenical partners that four areas should be given highest priority, namely: the Muslim World, India, West Africa and China. (Joint Meeting, February 1972).

In the extensive follow-up of the Task Force recommendations, another thorough review of the broadcast targets was done. The LWF/BS new General Director, Marc Chambron, made, in preparation for the 1975 RVOG Consultation on Long Range Planning, a careful analysis of the criteria which so far had governed the setting of priorities for broadcast targets. He found that it was not possible to only use general policies and old criteria. The situation was no longer what it was when RVOG started and the question of criteria was much more complex in 1975 than it was ten years earlier. He therefore suggested a more individual assessment of the situation in each case. (Chambron, Discussion Paper 1975).

In line with recommendations made earlier by the LWF Task Force and what Marc Chambron, as well as others, suggested at that time, several rearrangements with regard to broadcast targets and their order of priority were agreed upon at the 1975 RVOG Consultation.

Normally RVOG did not consider an area for regular broadcasts unless there was a local church (es) ready and able to assume the responsibility for program production and follow-up work. There were, however, exceptions. These exceptions were of two kinds. One was areas which were closed to regular church and mission work, and the other was where the political situation constituted special needs. The first category, which included large areas of the Muslim world and China, was included in the broadcast shcedule with the hope that the Christian message should reach at least some people and be of help to them. The second category, which included southern Africa, was considered because it was felt that the station had a Christian responsibility to disseminate information and speak to issues which the local churches for political reasons were unable to do.

Broadcast Languages

The second issue which belonged in the strategy considerations had to do with broadcast languages. The choice of languages is probably one of the most crucial decisions which the policy makers for a radio station have to take and a strategy question of the highest importance.

Christian broadcasters have in this matter usually followed one of two principles. One has been to broadcast in as many languages as possible,

even if it would mean short time-blocks and only occasional transmissions. The other principle has been to broadcast in a few carefully selected languages regularly and with substantial time-blocks set aside for each of them. The first principle is based on a message-centred assumption that the Word must be preached to all nations and we cannot know when the seed falls into the good soil. The other principle is based on the conviction that to effectively communicate the Gospel, a regular listening audience has to be built up and the message has to be followed up through effective audience relations work.

The language policy of RVOG was carefully discussed in the planning and implementation stages of the project. Already at the meeting of CWM in 1958, this matter was raised and the policies of other Christian radio stations were reviewed. There seems to be no record, however, of the actual decision on a language policy, but in 1963 the following statement is found in the Director's annual report: "RVOG has hitherto worked along the following principle:

1. Programs beamed into a given target area should represent insofar as possible, the Christian churches in that area; their situation, their approach to evangelism, Christian education, music, etc.
2. Broadcasts into a given area would not be initiated unless they can be sustained on a daily basis in the same language for a minimum of 30 minutes and preferably for one hour or more."

(LWF/CWM.a.1963:Exh.D)

Prior to that statement, 11 non-western languages had been accepted and 5 others were under consideration. (LWF/BS.B.a.1962:29). A list of factors which should be taken into consideration when broadcast languages were to be authorized had also been prepared at that time. (LWF/BS.B.a.1963:Exh.23). The basic language policy which had been adopted by LWF was also accepted by the ecumenical partners in the project. Later on, a joint "LWF/BS-CCIB Strategy for Broadcast Languages" was worked out. (Joint Meeting, January 1964:8-12). It should also be noted here that English and French were among the approved languages from the very beginning. Not only had this been done because some of the independent countries in Africa had decided to retain the colonial language as their official language, because of the many vernaculars, but there was also a deliberate strategy to make an effort to reach the educated elite in the two continents, as we shall see in the section on "Station Program Production".

Time Blocks

The language policy which RVOG had adopted also meant that substantial time-blocks had to be provided in the daily broadcast schedule. We have already referred to the adopted principle that a minimum broadcast time per day, in one and the same language, should be 30 minutes. Most of the programs produced by the local studios were also kept at that level. A few languages were allotted more time. Arabic was, for example, given 90 minutes per day from the start, and the same program was then repeated on a second beam. Swahili was allotted one hour per day which had to be reduced to 45 minutes the following year. From 1969 the daily broadcasts in this important language were back at 60 minutes. Through repeats or split broadcast time several languages had a total daily broadcast time of one hour or more. (cf.supra, p.106).

Taking into consideration the production capacity of an area studio, and at the request of local churches, the time-blocks were reviewed from time to time.

The principle of substantial and regular broadcasts was repeatedly stressed in strategy considerations and discussions over the years. It was also underlined by the Task Force Report which even suggested that some transmissions should be cancelled altogether in order to extend other transmissions. (Task Force Report 1972:8). This proposal was seriously considered in the long range planning for the RVOG operation the last few years. Circumstances made it, however, impossible to carry through all of these plans, although some adjustments along these lines were made before the station was taken over by the Ethiopian Government.

Broadcast Content

The fourth important issue in the strategy considerations over the years had to do with the message itself. There were not only questions about area and language priorities and how much time each area should be given which had to be taken into consideration. There was also the difficult question of what kind of broadcasts should have priority over others. In the "30-70 formula" a broad general guideline had been established which in itself was a strategy decision. The changing political situation and the felt needs within the RVOG broadcast targets called, however, for a regular review of "content priorities"

on the studio as well as on the station level. The decisions to increase the daily newscasts from 5 in 1963 to 16 three years later, and to 25 in 1971, were such strategy decisions. It was the specific situation in the RVOG service areas which necessitated this planning. The "Cultural Revolution" in China, which left the Christians in that country dispersed and largely without possibilities to get spiritual nurture, prompted RVOG to broadcast Bible readings at dictation speed in the late 1960's.

When churches in southern Africa in 1968 discontinued their program production for RVOG, the station leadership considered the situation in that part of Africa to be such, that special efforts had to be made to continue to let the people in that area know how the outside world and how the Christian Church looked upon the racial question.

We have here tried to show how assessments of the changing scene where RVOG operated and the felt needs, led to a constant review of priorities and approaches with a view to reaching people in their actual situation with a Christian message. These efforts have sometimes been termed "publishing the good news on the secular market." (Joergensen, op.cit.p.134).

3.2. Program Production

Two basic principles seem to have determined the RVOG programming from the very beginning: a) It should be a decentralized production, b) No syndicated "package programs" should be accepted. These two principles were later explained by Sigurd Aske when he said: "RVOG has avoided two temptations in missionary radio:

a) The building up of a "radio city" type of operation, where station staff and friends preach to the world.
b) The importation of sermons by "prophets from afar". We disappointed some friends and annoyed others by rejecting programs made in Europe and America". (Aske: IRM. July 1967:359).

This latter principle has been noted as rather unique for RVOG. Kushner writes: "RVOG stands alone among the African religious broadcasters in not accepting, on a regular basis, package or syndicated programs produced in Europe or the US." (Kushner, 1976:132). Consistant with this principle, sale of broadcast time was also rejected although this question was raised several times and seriously considered as a possible way out of financial difficulties.

It should also be recalled in this context that the principle of station integrity in programming was considered fundamental and was upheld throughout the whole operation period. The "western" concept of free flow of information was, however, a more controversial matter, as we shall see later.

3.2.1. Programming Conditions and Philosophies

The planners and leaders of the radio project were from the beginning aware of how essential, and at the same time complex, program planning and production were for a meaningful radio ministry. Questions about how relevant programs should be made for a diversified audience were already raised in the first project proposal. (LWF/CWM.a.1957:15). The following year serious concern was expressed for the importance of challenging programs, relevant to the people in their cultural setting and the need for a participatory program production. (LWF/CWM.m.1958:16).

It was also these questions and concerns which took Aske and other project leaders on extensive trips to Africa and Asia in 1959 and the following years.

When the project reached its implementation stage, more specific questions about program policy and planning became urgent. At the 1961 annual meeting of the Board, Aske raised the question of program planning as a major concern. "This is where the main battle of the radio project will be won or lost", he said, and suggested that time should be set aside at the next meeting for a thorough discussion of this matter. (LWF/BS.B.a. 1961:7).

Already in January the following year, the Radio Executive Committee met and, as suggested, the program planning was the main item on the agenda. At this meeting Gudmund Gjelsten presented what he called: "An attempt to point out some priority needs in the target areas of RVOG." He had at that time made a first survey of the areas and gathered basic data on living conditions and felt needs. Ulrich Fick who had just taken up his position as Program Director submitted "A short outline of program conditions and possibilities." In this report he discussed what he called: "The ground plan of program production" and various types of programs, their general format and standard.

In his report at the same meeting, Aske also outlined the "Countours of the station personality." He reiterated the basic objectives which had been adopted in 1959 and which constituted the station "personality".

The ground work for program planning had now been done and basic policy decisions had been taken. At the meeting of the Board later in the year, a statement on program content was made and the "30-70 formula" was mentioned as an already existing principle for the balance of program content. (LWF/BS.B.a.1962:18). At the same meeting it was also reported that LWF/BS and the LUTHERAN HOUR had agreed on certain policy matters regarding programming. (LWF/BS.B.a.1962:Exh.5).

In all these discussions, reports and statements, no attempt to formulate a program policy as such seems to have been made, nor was this done at any time later during the RVOG operation. Discussions on program format, content and standard continued and efforts were made, especially in the 1970's, by Knud Joergensen and others, to come to grips with the RVOG programming from the theological and professional aspects.

Against this background, it seems more adequate to talk about program conditions and a program philosophy than to talk about a program policy as such, especially since no such document exists.

We shall therefore, before going over to deal in more detail with actual production of programs, briefly summarize the conditions which governed the RVOG programming and the philosophy which guided it and gave it a profile.

Program Conditions

We can say that these conditions were of three different kinds. There were first the obvious obligations which derived from the declared allegiance of the station to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All programs were labelled "Voice of the Gospel", and this both required and excluded a number of things. It required a biblical orientation - a Christian perspective - in all programming. This had been emphasized all the time from the first presentation of the project proposal. It required faithfulness to the TRUTH in reporting and witnessing even if the truth was unpleasant and unpopular. It also required upholding of Christian moral

and ethical values in dealing with human and social issues. At the same time it excluded the use of objectionable and obscene language as well as the use of certain songs and music. Some of the practical implications of these conditions were heatedly discussed at times.

The second type of conditions derived from the contract signed with the Ethiopian Government. These were referred to as "franchise requirements". They were specified in six points under Article IX in the contract which we have mentioned in the section on Government relations (p.140). These conditions were of a legal nature and were brought up in all program and news controversies with the Government.

The third condition had to do with generally accepted professional standards both with regard to presentation and technical quality of the programs.

Most of these conditions were ambiguous and subject to individual and subjective judgements. What was objectionable language? What was unacceptable music? What did non-involvement in political questions mean? What constituted an attack on a church or religion? What was professional standard in an African and Asian context? These and similar questions were raised and debated all the time, but these conditions continued to serve as rules and regulations governing the program production.

Program Philosophy

In the previously mentioned discussions on program planning, a certain program philosophy was shaped. This philosophy represents a different dimension of the RVOG programming. The issue here was not rules and regulations, but an understanding of what the message was all about and how it should be communicated. In a simplistic way we can say that the program philosophy was based on the following principles:

a) The radio ministry should serve in the mission of the Church.
b) It should be contextual and true to life.
c) It should be culturally relevant.

The first objective of the radio ministry was "to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, as the only means of salvation, to the widest possible audience". This had been reiterated again and again when programming was discussed. The station's motto,

PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD, placed at the main entrance of the station, was also a constant reminder to all who visited and worked at RVOG that the station was first and foremost serving in "missio Dei".

Equally important was its role in human and social service. The program philosophy was here that the message should be contextual and true to life. There should be no artificial division of the human being. Spiritual and material needs should be seen together. The repeated and lengthy discussions about the "30-70 formula" between 1964 and 1973 at Board meetings, Studio Directors' Conferences and consultations indicate how important this question was.

A third principle had to do with cultural relevancy. Early discussions about the radio project indicate both awareness and concern about this aspect of the broadcasting ministry. Later on this principle was more and more emphasized. Menkir Esayas did, in a number of articles and research documents, lift up this as the crucial issue in Christian communication. "To communicate is to know and understand the genesis of cultures and their dimensions", he says. (Esayas 1981:44).

The absence of a defined program policy had, in the final analysis, a positive effect because it provided for a personal engagement among the producers and an identification with the program philosophy which RVOG stood for.

It was the RVOG Program Department which guided and co-ordinated the decentralized program production. The man who organized this department and led it during the initial period was the German Pastor and Broadcaster, Ulrich Fick (1962-1967). After him, this position was in succession held by the Norwegian Pastor and former Director of the Roodepoort studio, Jon Egil Ofstad (1967-1971), the British Missionary and Broadcaster, Michael Blair (1971-1972), the Nigerian and former Head of NBC,+) the Rev'd Victor Badejo (1972-1975) and the Danish Pastor and Broadcaster, Knud Joergensen.

3.2.2. Area Studio Program Production

We have in the previous sections discussed the principles behind the RVOG decentralized program production. We are now going to look at the

+) NBC = Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation

area studio operations and their program production which also will show that expectations were not always met and that actual developments did not always follow preconceived planning.

Studio Operations

As the broadcasting facilities in Addis Ababa were under construction, great efforts were also made to get the area studios operational in time. It had been said that program production planning should begin at least one year ahead of broadcasts. (LWF/BS.B.m.1961:4). It had also been agreed that shipment of recorded program tapes should arrive at the station two months prior to the first broadcast date. (LWF/BS.B.a.1963:Exh.22).

Records and statements from this time indicate that everything went well. In January 1962 it was reported that four of the LWF related studios would have required programs ready a year later. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:3). At the meeting of the Board later in the year, Aske said: "It has been heartening to see how enthusiastically and effectively the people responsible for each of the LWF-related area studios have taken hold of their often difficult assignment of getting the recording centers off to a quick start on a solid organization foundation and with a firm church backing." (LWF/BS.B.a.1962:3).

The MECC and the LH were even better off since they already had functioning studios with trained and experienced staff. It was estimated that eight studios should be ready and initially produce 8½ hours of daily programming at the time when the station was to start broadcasting. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:3). Only 6 studios could make it, but a year later 13 area studios were in operation and produced almost 8 hours together. The following tables show the number of studios which supplied programs for RVOC over the years, their geographical distribution and church affiliation.

Table 1 : Production Studios by Geographical areas

Geographical area	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Asia	1	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	2
Middle East	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Africa	4	7	8	10	10	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total	6	13	14	16	16	15	14	15	14	14	14	14	13	12

Note: Feeder studios not included.

Table 2 : Distribution of Production Studios between Cooperating Partners

Church affiliation	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
LWF-related	4	4	5	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Party B-related	1	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	3
LH-related	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other		1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
Total	6	13	14	16	16	15	14	15	14	14	14	14	13	12

With a few exceptions all these studios had good facilities and professional equipment at their disposal. Some were better off than others, both with regard to facilities and annual budgets, as the following table shows.

Table 3 : Sample figures from 1965

Studio	Capital Investment US dollar	Operating Budget 1965 US dollar
1. Antsirabe, Madagascar	45.000	13.300
2. Moshi, Tanzania	31.150	15.050+)
3. Yemissrach Dimts, Ethiopia	39.350	19.900++)
4. Roodepoort, South Africa	22.800+++)	101.500
5. Vijayawada, India	17.800	10.950

+) 4 out of 19 workers paid by overseas agencies.

++) Studio Director seconded with salary by the mission agency.

+++) No cost for purchase of land and building.

As we have indicated earlier, the shortage of trained nationals made it necessary to recruit expatriates to head up most of the area studios to begin with. Most of the Studio Directors were missionaries who were given crush-training in radio broadcasting if they had no such training and experience previously. It has therefore often been assumed that this was the main reason for the "western" style and approach in much of the studio production. There are, however, many good reasons for not putting all the blame on the expatriate Studio Directors. There were other factors which were probably of greater importance in this respect. Those had to do with the very concept of communication models and standard. It should also be noted that great efforts were made to replace exaptriates by nationals as soon as possible. The tables below show staff composition at some of the area studios in 1965 and leadership developments from 1963 through 1975.

Table 4 : Staff composition 1965 at some of the area studios +)

Studio	Expat riate staff	National staff	Part-time workers	Part-time workers	No. of board members
CARAVS India	2	7	-	9	6
Uyo, Nigeria	4	7	-	11	4
Colombo, Sri Lanka	2	16	9	18	8
Roodepoort S. Africa	1	11	1	12	6
Jos, Nigeria	2	10	3	12	6
Mema, Malawi	3	4	2	7	7
Antsirabe, Madagascar	2	9	-	11	6
Moshi, Tanzania	3	11	2	14	8
Vijayawada India	1	9	-	10	21
Madras, India	2	36	-	38	3
Y.D. Addis Ababa Ethiopia	1	9	-	10	11

Table 5 : Development of area studio leadership 1963-1975

	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1975
Nationals	1	3	6	9	10	10	10
Expatriates	5	11	10	5	4	4	4
Total	6	14	16	14	14	14	14

+) Similar statistics from all the studios are not available. It is, however, estimated that all the studios together with the station engaged some 450 people, and that together with board members there were more than 500 people involved.

Production Capacity

Each studio had a commitment to fill a daily time-slot in the RVOG broadcast schedule. These programs should be recorded and shipped to Addis Ababa. To avoid "dead-air" in the daily transmissions there should always be a back-log of programs for several weeks at the station and in addition there was also a set of "stand-by" programs for each studio in case the shipment was delayed or a program had to be rejected for one reason or another. This meant that the programs had to be undated and did not have the flavour of actuality. Later on attempts were made to counterbalance the undatedness of the programs by using station staff from respective language areas for brief topics or features which were added to the regular program. This was, however, not done on a regular basis and it thus remained an unresolved problem. Studio as well as station leadership was overly optimistic about the production capacity of the studios. Initial commitment was to produce daily programs of one hour's duration. The NECC studio was expected to fill three hours per day. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:3). A few months after regular broadcasting started it already became clear that there had been a gross miscalculation of studio production capacity. In August 1964 Aske reported to the Board: "Over the last year and a half, unfortunately, everyone of the studios has had trouble in meeting deadlines and making their production goals." (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:8). Fick reported at the same meeting: "A sharp cut-back in transmission time was necessary in the summer of 1963 to allow studios to catch up with their shipping deadlines." (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:report, p.6).

This created a big problem from mid-1963 when the two shortwave transmitters were in operation and 13½ hours daily broadcasting was scheduled. The area studio production filled only approximately 7 hours and the rest had to be "put together" at the station. (LWF/BS.B.a.1963:2).

The production capacity improved gradually in the following years partly because of improved efficiency and partly because more studios became operational. The average share of the area studios in the total programming of RVOG over 14 years was approximately 60 per cent of the total production (cf. p.185).

Types of Programs

The program philosophy of RVOG was in principle accepted by the area studios as a guideline for program production. The so-called "30-70 formula"

also served to begin with as a yardstick for program balance. It did not, however, take long before questions were raised with regard to the suggested balance between direct evangelistic and cultural programs. Aske reported in 1964 that several churches had suggested a "50-50 formula" rather than the adopted 30-70. (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:9).

Fick observed in his report the same year a "rather disturbing uniformity of subjects and styles". He referred to shortage of production staff as a reason for this. He had made a careful analysis of program trends and found certain alarming deviations from the RVOG program philosophy. He observed not only a deviation with regard to program balance, but also from the cultural context. He assumed that "many African and Asian Christians were hesitant to touch on matters of their own culture and traditional background." He pointed out that this was particularly the case with regard to music. "Second and third-rate Western recordings dominate", he said and added, "programs ... musically underline the suspicion that becoming a Christian still means to accept Western culture and abandon whatever national traditions Africa and Asia still have retained.".

He also observed a dangerous trend of isolation in studio production. The churches had not yet realized how to use radio in their ministry. "The gap between programming and the churches which have to make use of those programs must not be allowed to grow", he said. He noted that the station had failed in this vital field and suggested that "something should be done soon otherwise our faults will slam the open door which RVOG finds in many areas." (LWF/BS.B.a.1964: report).

Two years later Fick presented a detailed analysis of program content, format and balance which gave a good overall view of the program production at the area studios. The analysis covered the third week of November 1965. The table below shows some of his findings.

Table 5 : Summary of program analysis November 14-20 1965 +)

Studio/ language	TU time per day (minutes)	Balance Direct Evang/ Indirect Evang/ Inf.-Education	Balance % Music/talk.
1. Colombo, Sri Lanka/ Sinhalese	26:30	20- 21-59	57/43
2. Habalpur, India Hindi	26:30	7- 45-48	50/50
3. Madras, India English	14:30	19- 25-56	
4. Madras, India Tamil	24:45	27- 34-39	42/58
5. Vijayawada, India Telugu	28:10	22- 59-19	33/67
6. Teheran, Iran Farsi	27:30	No analysis submitted	
7. Beirut, Lebanon Arabic	81:00	18- 50-32	23/77
8. Antsirabe, Madagascar Malagasy	37:35	23- 13-64	20/80
9. Mema, Malawi Nyanja	25:00	29- 47-24	29/71
10. Enugu, Nigeria English	28:30	22- 23-55	29/71
11. Jos, Nigeria Hausa	26:55	29- 24-47	12/88
12. Roodepoort, S.Africa Afrikaans	13:30	8- 71-21	40/60
13. Roodepoort, S.Africa Sotho	13:31	0-100- 0	47/53
14. Roodepoort, S.Africa Zulu	13:04	43- 35-22	30/70
15. Moshi, Tanzania Swahili	32:42	27- 51-22	39/61
16. YD Addis Ababa Amharic	28:50	18- 47-35	20/80

+) Later analyses of this kind are not available at the time of writing the manuscript. Regular analyses were made but since the entire RVOG archive was confiscated in March 1977 and has not been released, it is not possible to get hold of them.

In his comments to the above analysis, Fick commended the studios for "a greater variety of approaches" and for a better balance of program formats. "In the overall picture, the 1965 programs came closer to the 30-70 standard than in the years before", he said. (LWF/BS.B.a.1966: Report, p.4).

When Ferdinand Baglo made his analysis of program scripts in 1971/72, he found that the average split of program content was still at 54/46 which meant that 54 per cent of the broadcast time allotted to the area stuios was used for direct evangelism, while only 46 per cent was used for educational and cultural programs over against the suggested 70 per cent. Studio reports over the years also indicate that the studio leadership did not feel bound to the 30-70 balance. The Madras studio stated in 1970: "We do not accept the distinction between the sacred and the secular. We claim that all our programs are religious." The Addis Ababa studio (Yemisrach Dimts) made the remark: "Our programs aim at serving the whole man - We just try to do good programs.". The Ngaoundéré studio justified a reversed formula by referring to the fact that their audience was predominantly Muslim."Our programs are 70 per cent religious and 30 per cent educational", was their comment. (Quotation by Esayas 1981:77).

The following examples of program titles from 1971/73 indicate the variety of subjects treated in programs produced at four arbitrarily selected studios:

Ngaoundéré, Cameroun (Language: Fulfulde)

Bible Drama - Christian Hymns - Question Box - How People Live - Usmanu's Family - Agriculture - African and Asian History - Childrens Program - Health Program.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Ethiopian Orthodox Mission studio) (Language: Amharic) Message from the Gospel - God's Wonderful Deeds - The Role of the Church in Society - Christian Life - Interviews and Panel Discussions - Expanding Role of Women in Church and Society.

Jos, Nigeria (Language: Hausa)

Folk Stories - Meeting Point - People of Africa - Bible Drama - Youth Program on Christian Living - Your Health - Wise Man Say - Bible Study - Christian Men and Women.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Yemissrach Dimts Studio)
(Language: Amharic) - General Knowledge - Feature - Church Service - Youth Program - Women's Program - Story-teller - Our Health - Counselling - The World of Books - Travelling the World - Listeners' Hymn Choice - Social Concerns - Bible Study - The World This Week - Talk of the Town.

In a special analysis which Knud Joergensen made of programs in the Fulfulde language during a period in 1974, he observed that the approach was marked by an intimate knowledge of the traditional way of communicating in the Fulani culture. It was more of advice than direct teaching. The title: "Listen to Advice" stood out as a typical approach in the Fulfulde programs. (Joergensen, op.cit.Exh.III:11).

A survey of program types in the Swahili and Hausa program production was made by Menkir Esayas in the late 1970's. He observed that in the Swahili program production at the Moshi studio, religious programs had the highest rating. The Studio Director also made the following comment: "Essentially the business of the studio is to project the mission of the Church, particularly the evangelistic aspect.". Second rating in the Swahili production was given to programs of political (civic) nature.

In the case of programs in the Hausa language, produced at the Jos studio, Menkir Esayas observed that religious and educational programs had the highest rating, while programs of political and cultural nature were rated lowest. (Esayas 1981:154, 200).

The above-mentioned examples indicate how the studios developed their own rating of program content as well as their own style and approach.

This important aspect of the radio ministry needs much more systematic research than can be afforded here. There is, at this time, not enough material available to make a meaningful analysis and a proper assessment of trends and developments in the studio program production. The Department of Audience Research and Planning at RVOG began in 1973/74 to set up a system for an ongoing systematic program analysis. Miss Marjatta Karkkainen from Finland, who joined the RVOC staff in 1973, was in charge of this work. A good deal was also done, but all the records were, unfortunately, confiscated when the station was nationalized and are therefore not available at this time.

Program Standard and Quality

Considering the fact that most of the area studios had to engage producers with little training and experience, it is not surprising that the standard and quality of the programs were low to begin with. In 1964 the Program Director, Ulrich Fick, made the following critical remarks: "The technical quality of the program tapes show too often the traces of rushed work, of lack of experience in placing microphones or in doing smooth editing. Many productions lack the professional touch in script-writing, casting and composition. Frequently, transmission units are badly put together; program elements which easily could have been used for a Christian application are left in the air; other program elements are often forcibly bent towards a witness which they neither contain nor support." (LWF/BS.B.a. 1964: Report p.2).

Fick was, however, of the opinion that it was the station which had to take most of the blame. The station had fallen short in its vital role of "giving suggestions, inspiration and impulses which should have stimulated the studio staff ... It is up to the station to draw the studios' attention to what they do not discover themselves, to feed material which can be used and to widen the scope of production", he said.

At the same time, here was the station's dilemma. To do just what Fick suggested was easily taken for "enlightened paternalism" and as an effort to impose values and standards which were foreign to the indigenous people. Considering this aspect, Baglo suggested the building of "a Third World image" of RVOG, aiming at "complete removal of all that would give it a western, imperialistic, colonial mentality and paternalistic image. RVCG should become increasingly a voice from the Third World." (Baglo, op.cit. p.145).

At the same time as Baglo was critical of the program standard in general, he also admitted that educational and cultural programs reflected "care and research" on the part of the producers. (Baglo, op.cit. p.84).

The official records do not say much about the program standard and quality in the 1970's. One evidence of a marked improvement is, however, the fact that the station cancelled the traditional broadcast editing in 1972 and the Studio Directors assumed the legal and professional responsibilities for their programming on behalf of the station.

There was also a growing demand from the producers for more training and for consultancy in order to improve the program standard. Ernst Bauerochse reported in 1974: "The RVOG-related studios have repeatedly expressed their desire and need for assistance in up-grading of their whole operation. This refers particularly to intensified training of producers, help with program resource material, as well as consultancy and training in the technical field." (LWF/BS.B.a.Exh.G.O.p.7).

Another indication of improvement of professional skills is the remark by Knud Joergensen about the Fulfulde program production. He says "All the producers seem to have an intimate knowledge of the audience and its indigenous ways of communicating." (Joergensen,op.cit.Exh.III:12).

In 1973/74 the RVOG/DARP expanded its training and consultancy activities and was giving the studios a systematic assistance to meet the demans which Bauerochse mentioned in his annual report of 1974. We shall come back to these activities in a later section. (cf. section 3.4. below).

The observations we have made here about program styles and formats, as well as standard and quality, show that it was in the tension between professional excellency and cultural contextuality and identity that the program production developed and gradually improved at the area studios.

3.2.3. Station Program Production

It was repeatedly stressed during the planning and implementation stages of the project that RVOG should not become a "Radio City" from which station staff should speak to the world. At the same time, the initial plans also included a "foreign language service", which should be handled at the station. This service should first of all include world and church news, but also programs of different types and formats. Fick suggested that the station should perhaps offer English and French programs to a wide audience, for instance a high-levelled late evening program for English speaking Africans. He also suggested that this service could be run as joint work together with "Party B" and that the programs should be heard in all target areas from West Africa to the Near East and India. (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:report, p.7).

We have already mentioned that the two cooperating partners had jointly approved English and French as broadcast languages, and Fick's suggestion that the foreign language services should be a joint undertaking seems to have been accepted with the exception of the medium wave operation. (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:7).

As Fick had indicated to begin with, this service, on both short-wave and medium wave, was intended for a wide and sophisticated audience in the entire service area. It was felt that a Christian radio ministry had a special obligation to reach the influential elite - those who were policy and decision makers - with a Christian message. To achieve this objective, and at the same time cope with the demans to fill in for studios which for one reason or another were not able to meet their commitments, resulted in a rapidly increasing station production.

We shall now briefly review the developments of "the foreign language service" at the station for both medium and short-wave transmissions. The news service shall be dealt with as a separate item, because of its specific nature and its implications for the station.

The International Shortwave Service

Early staff recruitment and planning indicate that only a limited program production was envisaged to take place at the station. From the job descriptions for English and French producers it is, however, clear that the idea was to do original production with a variety of program formats. (LWF/BS.B.a.1962:Exh.9).

The unexpected deficiency in studio production which we have mentioned in the previous section made it necessary for the station to step in with an emergency program production in English already after a few months. This was intended to be a temporary arrangement but it was also considered to be a supplement to what the studios normally could do. Much of this "emergency" production was music programs, but there was also regular production of feature programs, interviews and treatment of international events. (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:8). The English program had come to stay.

To begin with the Program Director was supervising this program production, but in 1969 a special "English Office" was established, with its

own "Organizer" and staff. The English program organizers were in succession the following: The Anglican Missionary, Michael Blair, from Great Britain (1969-1971), the Danish Pastor and Broadcaster, Knud Joergensen, (1971-1974), the American Journalist, Eugene Thieman (1974-1976), and the Nigerian Broadcaster, Dick Mbodwam (1976/77).

French program production at the station began much later. To begin with, it was expected that the Yaounde (FEMEC) studio should produce programs in French for transmission over RVOG, like any other area studio. All seems to have been set for that arrangement. However, due to an offer of 3½ hours weekly transmission time on the national network, the studio was not in the position to also produce programs for RVOG. Aske informed the Board in August 1964: "The studio in Yaounde has withdrawn from RVOG production, with the result that RVOG plans for French programming for West Africa have collapsed". (LWF/ES.B.a.1964:5).

The following year the Board as well as the Radio Executive Committee confirmed previous decisions and encouraged the station to begin French programming on shortwave. A producer had already been engaged in early 1965 and the French news service on medium wave began in March the same year. In late 1966 French broadcasting on shortwave also began.

In order to secure relevant program material for a regular French service, a team of RVOG staff visited West Africa in March/April the same year. The result of that visit was a network of feeder studios among which the FEMEC studio in Yaounde was considered the most important. It was, however, felt that program production should not be limited to one feeder studio only, since the programs were intended for several target areas.

Regular program production in French started at the station in the course of 1966 and in November that year regular transmissions could begin. The first French Program Organizer was the French clergyman and radio reporter, Marc Chambron, who served in that capacity between 1966 and 1972. He was succeeded by the former Studio Director from Yaounde, André Pache, who served only a short term (1972/73) and was then replaced by the French Journalist Paul Eberhard (1972-1977).

In late 1968 the station had to step in and fill the transmission time for Southern Africa when the studio at Roodepoort dropped out. The following year the Enugu studio was transferred to Jos, due to the civil war in Nigeria, and the station had again to step in and take over part of the English production which that studio had been responsible for. All these circumstances contributed to an increasing station production which was not intended to begin with.

Considering the whole period of operation the station was responsible for an average of approximately 40 per cent of the total programming on short-wave and 70 per cent of the medium wave broadcasts. However, due to the fact that some programs or segments of them were used on several beams, the actual production volume was less than that.

The following tables show the balance between studio and station programming as well as respective shares of the cooperating partners in short-wave broadcasts.

Table 1: Breakdown of studio and station programming

Year	Daily transmission time	Area studio production	Station production	
			Progr.	News
1963	10h.30'	6h.15'	3h.30'	45'
1964	13h.30'	7h.45'	4h.15'	1h.30'
1965	13h.30'	8h.	3h.30'	2h.
1966	18h.	11h.	4h.15'	2h.45'
1967	18h.	11h.	4h.	3h.
1968	19h.30'	11h.30'	4h.30'	3h.30'
1969	19h.30'	11h.	4h.45'	3h.45'
1970	20h.	11h.30'	4h.45'	3h.45'
1971	20h.	12h.	3h.45'	4h.15'
1972	20h.30'	11h.30'	4h.45'	4h.15'
1973	19h.15'	11h.30'	3h.30'	4h.15'
1974	18h.30'	11h.15'	3h.15'	4h.
1975	18h.30'	11h.15'	3h.15'	4h.
1976	18h.30'	11h.	3h.15'	4h.15'

Table 2: Programming shares of the cooperating partners

Year	Daily transmission time	Party A	Party B	LH
1963	10h.30'	5h.30'	4h.30'	30'
1964	13h.30'	6h.	6h.30'	1h.
1965	13h.30'	6h.	6h.30'	1h.
1966	18h.	8h.45'	8h.15'	1h.
1967	18h.	9h.30'	7h.30'	1h.
1968	19h.30'	10h.	8h.30'	1h.
1969	19h.30'	10h.	8h.30'	1h.
1970	20h.	10h.30'	8h.30'	1h.
1971	20h.	10h.30'	8h.30'	1h.
1972	20h.30'	11h.	8h.30'	1h.
1973	19h.15'	9h.45'	8h.30'	1h.
1974	18h.30'	9h.	8h.30'	1h.
1975	18h.30'	9h.30'	8h.	1h.
1976	18h.30'	9h.30'	8h.	1h.

Note: The above figures include repeats.

The domestic Medium Wave Service

It should be recalled that the Swiss firm, Brown Boveri & Co., which had delivered and installed the RVOG shortwave equipment, in 1962 donated a one Kw medium wave transmitter to the Federation. (cf.supra, p.67). This donation realized a dream which the project leadership had; namely to provide a special service to the metropolitan audience in Addis Ababa. It was clear that this audience would be reached most economically and effectively through medium wave. The offer was therefore accepted with gratitude by the Board. (LWF/BS.B.m.1962:5).

Test broadcasts started in June the following year and it was planned that a regular service should begin on the Ethiopian New Year's Day (September 12) with four hours of daily transmission. (LWF/CWM.a.1963:Exh.D).

Implementation of these plans seems to have been delayed. Only in November 1963 was Ato Hagos Legesse, who had served as Administrative Assistant to Asko, appointed Temporary Editor of the medium wave programming. In July the following year, Ato Menkir Esayas was made full-time Editor.

In his 1964 report, Fick lamented over the "time-consuming and frustrating" production of 3½ hours daily programs for the medium wave service. He said that, to begin with, the idea had been to program medium wave with material from other sources than station production, but that had proved to be a miscalculation. Programs for the Addis Ababa audience had to meet the specific needs and expectations of rather sophisticated listeners which to a large extent consisted of the country's political elite and international communities. There was, however, an inter-change of program material between the medium and shortwave services at the station which to some extent eased the work load.

In 1968 the medium wave programming was for principle and political reasons transferred to the local Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. All Amharic program production was then taken over by the local studio but production of English and French programs as well as the news service remained at the station. (LWF/BS.B.a.1969:Exh.C-12). By this arrangement the Medium Wave Office at the station was dissolved.

From the next table we can see how the total medium wave transmissions gradually increased over the years and how the time-blocks of the various language services were distributed.

Table 3: Breakdown of programming for medium wave services

Year	Daily transm. time	Amharic progr.	English progr.	French progr.	Music progr.	News bulletins
1964	3h.	1h.15'	15'		1h.	30'
1965	3h.30'	1h.15'	15'		1h.15'	45'
1966	5h.	2h.	30'	30'	1h.15'	45'
1967	5h.	2h.	30'	30'	1h.15'	45'
1968	6h.	2h.	1h.	30'	1h.45'	45'
1969	6h.15'	2h.	1h.	30'	1h.45'	1h.
1970	6h.30'	2h.	1h.	30'	1h.45'	1h.15'
1971	6h.45'	2h.	1h.	30'	2h.	1h.15'
1972	6h.45'	2h.	1h.	30'	2h.	1h.15'
1973	6h.45'	2h.15'	1h.30'	30'	1h.15'	1h.15'
1974	6h.45'	2h.15'	1h.30'	30'	1h.15'	1h.15'
1975	6h.45'	2h.15'	1h.30'	30'	1h.15'	1h.15'
1976	6h.45'	2h.15'	1h.30'	30'	1h.15'	1h.15'

It is obvious that the RVOC "foreign language services", on both shortwave and medium wave, met a real need and were appreciated. At the same time, it was these services which created a growing uneasiness and exposed the station to criticism of contributing to cultural imperialism. There were basically two factors which made up this uneasiness. One was the fact that the same programs or segments of them were broadcast to several areas and thereby lost some of the"nearness" and contextuality. The other was the fact that the station, to some extent, had become a "radio city" which was contrary to the original intention.It is true that the production teams in both the English and the French offices consisted of persons from many different nations including the Third World, but this did not resolve the problem.

At the 1971 Studio Directors' Conference both the English and the French Program Organizers raised serious questions about the validity and usefulness of programs which were intended for a continent-wide audience. (Studio Dir. Conference 1971: Report).

Considering English and French broadcasts, the LWF Task Force suggested in 1972 "that it might be wiser to eliminate some of the English broadcasts in favour of French, especially as the lingua franca in some areas is changing from English to an indigenous language". With regard to the role of the station in production of programs for these services, the Task Force suggested that "there should be a gradual shift toward origination of a higher percentage of programs from the areas themselves". (Task Force Report 1972:8).

In line with these suggestions a reorganization of the "foreign language services" was considered in 1975. A "continental French studio" was envisaged with a network of feeder-studios in the African countries where French was the official language. It was subsequently recommended that "Station program production in English and French for a continental audience discontinue and only a medium wave production continue at the station in close cooperation with the local church.". (RVOG Consultation, November 1975: report). This proposal was discussed, but no consensus was reached at that time. It was, however, agreed that the proposal should be further studied, especially the suggested "continental French studio".

3.2.4. RVOG News Service

The question of whether a regular news service should be part of the RVOG radio ministry or not seems at no time to have been an issue. It appears to have been taken for granted.

When Fick outlined the RVOG future programming in 1962, he simply stated: "News belongs to the program of a real broadcasting station.". He therefore suggested: "The first big program part originating from the station should be news". (LWF/BS.EC.a.1962:report). The Executive Committee concurred with Fick and even if it was realized that a news service would probably be the most difficult part of the radio ministry, it was so important that it had to be undertaken. (LWF/BS.EC.m.1962:7).

From these early discussions no clear reasons why a news service was considered so important seem to have been given. Only in passing Fick said in his repot: "News transmissions attract the biggest audience ... They can make the station interesting."

Fick probably did not mean that this was the main reason for going into a news operation. As we shall see, RVOG never considered news a "bait" in order to catch an audience, but it was seen as a Christian obligation and a valid service in its own right.

Before giving a brief account of the developments of the news service, we shall give some attention to the basic principles which guided the news operation and some of the problems and constraints which it had to live with.

Operation Principles and Constraints

RVOC was from the beginning determined to provide a news service which was independent, audience-oriented and as objective as possible. For these reasons the BBC offer of its news service for relaying was turned down. Fick reported to the Radio Executive Committee in January 1962:"The BBC was generous enough to offer us its News Service for relaying. This could mean to cancel the plan of having our own news desk, and to transmit the BBC news without any charge. That sounds quite nice ... Nevertheless, for the very reason of our independence and the profile of our program, we cannot take the easy way of relaying the BBC News Service. Our station should not be mixed up with other stations.". In the same report Fick also said that he did not think that RVOG should relay only on big European and American news agencies. (LWF/BS.EC.a.Report, pp 3,6).

The ambition to provide an independent and objective news service was closely related to the question of subscription to wire services from world news agencies. The problem here was both financial and a matter of preference. In July 1963 it was reported that the station had subscribed to the wire services from the British Reuter and Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA). It was, however, felt that the station needed a third news source to supplement the two already subscribed to. The question was also raised as to how the station could get "real African news". (LWF/BS.B.m.1963:5).

Prior to the Board meeting, the Radio Executive Committee had discussed this question and come to the conclusion that the Associated Press (AP) was "too American" and that Agencie France Presse (AFP) was "too colonial". The Committee was therefore not ready to recommend a third news agency at that time, but instructed the General Director to make further investigations. (LWF/BS.EC.m.1963:8).

At the above-mentioned board meeting in July, Aske recommended that, in view of the planned newscasts in French, the station should subscribe to a third wire service. Considering available alternatives, the Board authorized the subscription to AFP in addition to the two already subscribed to. (LWF/BS. B.m.1963:12). The reason for this choice was not only that AFP was cheaper than AP but also that it was considered to cover the Third World better than the other agencies.

These discussions and actions indicate that the RVOG staff and policy makers were aware of the danger of becoming one-sided and appear to be a voice of the political "West" only. East European agencies were considered from time to time, but for various reasons these suggestions were never pursued. In 1976 RVOG subscribed to the USSR wire service TASS on an experimental basis, but after a few months it was found to be of little use to RVOG because it did not carry much "hard news".

The most important pre-condition for an independent and meaningful news service was, however, freedom to handle the news operation. It was here that RVOG was under two kinds of constraint. One had to do with the local churches and the other with the Ethiopian Government.

The fact that the RVOG newscasts, in a given language, were attached to transmissions of programs produced by a church studio in the area to which the newscasts were beamed, meant that they appeared to be a "voice" of the local church. In a politically tense situation or if a particular news item was disliked by the authorities, the church was put in an embarrassing situation. It was the identification of the RVOG news service with the cooperating local church which created the problems with the NECC in 1965 and with the ELCT in Tanzania in 1972. (cf.supra.p.145).

To avoid problems with the authorities in the Middle East, the NECC churches wanted to have a certain control over the news bulletins in Arabic. The station felt that such an arrangement would be a dangerous precedence which could lead to suppression and slanting in the news reporting. The RVOG news service should be "a beam of truth", and this aim would be defeated if, for fear of negative reactions from authorities, the news reporting was too selective. In the discussions about the RVOG news service in Arabic,

Aske pointed out: "We as Christian broadcasters must let men know what is going on in the world, especially in our day and time when news scales are tampered with. Of course, news attracts listeners, but primarily the broadcasting of news has a value in itself, as a witness to truth." (Studio Directors' Conference Report 1965).

There were also others who argued that the news service should aim at reconciliation and peace. The local churches should therefore be given more control over the newscasts beamed into their area. This demand also came from the ELCT in Tanzania in the early 1970's.

The station did not see a way to give up the principles of integrity and objectivity, and meet the demand of more control from some of the churches. This resulted in the discontinuation of the news service in Arabic in mid-1965. The news translators/announcers in respective languages were, however, expected to call the attention of the news editor on duty to such news items as were irrelevant or were particularly sensitive for a given area, who then gave necessary instructions.

This discussion had brought the whole question of RVOG news policies into focus. It had refined the conception of the station's role in the dissemination of world news and reinforced the motivation to carry out this ministry, not as a means to an end, but as a valid Christian ministry in its own right.

The other constraint which the RVOG news service had to live with was the pressure for more control from the Ethiopian Government. We have earlier dealt with this question under "Government Relations". (cf.supra.pp.140 ff). The detailing of a Liaison Officer from the Ministry of Information, who should give advice and be available for consultation on domestic news and news "affecting Ethiopia", was frustrating and difficult at times. (cf.supra, pp.140-141). This arrangement which was imposed on the station reduced its freedom in news selection and presentation, particularly in the domestic news service. The station was able to maintain its integrity, but the inconvenience and tension which resulted from this arrangement was the price which had to be paid for the possibility to continue the news operation. A distinction had to be made between the concept of integrity and the western concept of "free flow of information",

a distinction which many had difficulty in accepting and which was also difficult to define.

To counteract the arrangement imposed on the station and to avoid unnecessary conflicts with the authorities, the station set up a daily routine, whereby the master copy of each bulletin was checked by the Station Director or by the RVOG Officer on duty before being translated into the various languages and broadcast.

This routine worked very well, and even it it was cumbersome, it was seen as the best way out of the dilemma. A deep sense of mutual responsibility marked this daily routine over the years, and all who were involved showed full solidarity with the station.

It should also be mentioned in this connection that the RVOG leadership, together with the news editors, reviewed the news policies and operation procedures from time to time. The last thorough review was done in 1976 when the international debate on a "New World Information and Communication Order" was taken into consideration and when the station was in the middle of the Ethiopian revolution. (LWF/COC.a.1977:Exh.9 A/3).

Developments of the News-room Operation

The RVOG news service was inaugurated on the 5th of May 1963. To begin with there were five daily newscasts in three languages - three were in English, one in Amharic and one in Swahili. The following year a daily bulletin in Arabic, intended for the Middle East, was added. For political reasons, the Arabic news had to be discontinued after only one year. Even if the experience with the news service in Arabic was discouraging, it did not slow down the expansion of the operation in other languages. In 1966 it was said that all broadcast languages should include world news. (LWF/BS.B.a.1966: Report, p.8).

The following two tables show how the RVOG news operation developed over the years - how languages were added and how the number of bulletins increased.

Table 1: Expansion of the newsroom operation by daily newscasts and languages

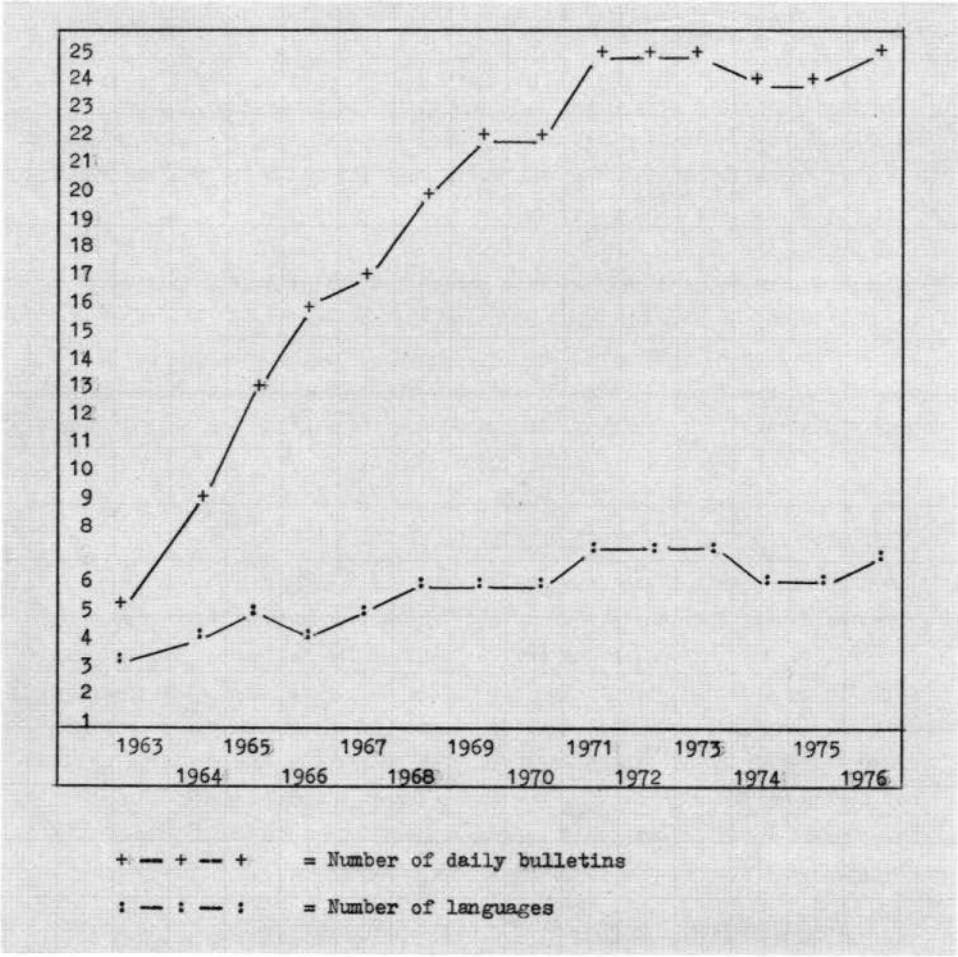

Table 2: Breakdown of daily newscasts by language and number of casts on shortwave and medium wave

	Shortwave									Medium wave			Number of bulletins	Number of languages
	Amharic	Arabic	Pulfulde	Hausa	Hindi	Oromo	Swahili	English	French	Amharic	English	French		
1963	1						1	3					5	3
1964	1	1					1	4		1	1		9	4
1965	1	1					1	7		1	1	1	13	5
1966	1						1	7	4	1	1	1	16	4
1967	1				1		1	7	4	1	1	1	17	5
1968	1			1	1		1	7	5	1	2	1	20	6
1969	1			1	1		1	7	5	2	2	2	22	6
1970	1			1	1		1	7	5	2	2	2	22	6
1971	1		1	1	1		1	8	6	2	2	2	25	7
1972	1		1	1	1		1	8	6	2	2	2	25	7
1973	2		1	1	1		1	8	5	2	2	2	25	7
1974	2		1	1			1	8	5	2	2	2	24	6
1975	2		1	1			1	8	5	2	2	2	24	6
1976	2		1	1		1	1	8	5	2	2	2	25	7

The above table shows that from 1965 English and French were given priority over other languages. The number of bulletins in English were that year increased from 4 to 7. News bulletings in French were also introduced that year, but only on medium wave. Towards the end of the following year, 4 French newscasts were also introduced on shortwave.

From 1965 an average of 70 per cent of all newscasts were in these two languages. In addition to the regular news bulletings, a feature service in English was also added. In August 1965 a special staff position for this service was established. The reason for doing that was explained in the following way: "At a time when government stations continually narrow their point of view and present background information under the auspices

of their own ideologies, some non-biased factual information on current events is especially important and serves a real need in Africa and Asia." (LWF/BS.B.a.1966: Report p.13).

The 5-minute features which followed the English news bulletins dealt with specific political issues or current events of religious, cultural and social nature. An analysis of the feature service during three months in 1966 showed that out of 96 topics, 60 dealt with political issues, 18 with church events and 18 with social questions. (LWF/BS.B.a.1966:Report).

As already mentioned, church news had a low priority from the beginning, and even if there was a certain improvement over the years, it never played the intended role in the RVOG ministry. Some called it "a hit and miss effort." (Quotation by Kushner 1976:92). Others were more appreciative of it.

The news-room routine was that the English editor on duty made the selection of news items from the wire services and prepared the "master copy". The French news editor had certain freedom to use the French version of AFP and Reuter and in consultation with the English editor, prepare the French bulletin. Newscasts in other languages were direct translations of the English "master copy", although, as we have mentioned already, the news translator/announcer in a given language was expected to use his judgement with regard to which news items were relevant and which ought to be deleted or rewritten.

Administratively, the news operation was under the Program Department until 1975. The expansion of the operation and the number of personnel involved made it finally necessary to make it an administrative unit of its own. It had been felt for a long time that the magnitude of the operation warranted both a budget of its own and representation in the RVOG Cabinet. A news department was therefore set up in 1975. At that time the news-room staff consisted of 23 full-time employees of 10 different nationalities.

The man who organized the RVOG news service from the beginning and served as Chief News Editor for more than a decade, was the British Journalist and former BBC News Editor, Kenneth Stewart. When he resigned in 1974, he

was succeeded by another British newsman, Hugh Pain, who served in this capacity until the end of 1976. During the last few months of the RVOG operation, the German Radio Journalist, Peter Becher, served as Chief News Editor. At the time when RVOG began broadcasting, it was said that "news broadcasts can make or break the station". (LWF/BS.EC.a.1963:8). In the following years, there were situations when the news service was about "to break" the whole operation. No other activity of the station was so criticised as the news service was. There were times when the authorities threatened to close down the station because of the news and there were times when the station was prepared to do the same. At the same time, there was no other station activity which was so appreciated as the news service.

In the final analysis, there is no question that it was the news service which to a large extent made up the image and reputation of the station. Most of the area studios and their related churches as well as listeners in general considered the RVOG news to be objective and reliable. Audience surveys, as well as listener mail, confirmed this fact. James Kushner also commends RVOG for its objectivity and thorough reporting on national and international events. (Kushner, op.cit.p.90).

3.3. RVOG Listeners

It has been said that "the most important element in any broadcasting project is the listening audience". (Van Deusen, 1968:152). What makes this "element" so important is the fact that no meaningful media communication can take place unless the audience is given its proper role to play. Not always has enough attention been given to this, and the question which has to be raised here is how much attention RVOG gave to its listeners and what role they played in the radio ministry.

There seem to be at least three things which a Christian radio ministry ought to avoid. One is to be content with a potential or "imagined" audience, claiming that the message is so powerful in itself that it is bound to be effective regardless of whether there is any direct relation to the listeners or not. The "message-centred" Christian broadcaster is not only pre-occupied with the message but pays also little or no attention to what meaning the listener may assign to the message. In this case

it is not only a question of whether there is an actual audience or not, but - if there is one - there is also the danger that the radio ministry turns out to be counterproductive because the message is de-coded or understood wrongly.

The other danger is at the opposite extreme where the broadcaster is so pre-occupied with the audience, and how to capture and keep it, that the message - its content and quality - is neglected. The over-riding concern is then to produce programs which are attractive to a given audience and the Christian radio ministry is thus reduced to entertainment.

A third danger is that the broadcaster gets so busy with daily routines that the audience is simply forgotten and neglected. What happens in this case is that the programs become increasingly irrelevant and out of touch, which also means that the communication process is being disrupted all together. Considering these dangers in Christian media communication, we realize that the question about audience relations in the RVOG ministry was crucial for the whole operation. The important thing here is not the fact that RVOG had millions of daily listeners, but to what extent there was a meaningful interplay between the broadcasters and the listeners. Was the RVOG audience just a listening crowd? To what extent was there an interaction? What did listener mail and audience surveys mean to the radio ministry, and to what extent was the follow-up work of any significance in the whole operation?

These are some of the crucial questions which need more treatment than can be afforded within the scope of this study. Here we shall only be able to follow the developments and give a brief account of what actually took place in this sector of the radio ministry. Special attention shall be given to the early planning of the audience relations work and its administrative difficulties over a number of years. We shall also briefly take up some aspects of the audience research and surveys which were undertaken.

3.3.1. Audience Relations

The fact that an audience relations officer was engaged even before there was a functioning program department is an indication of how important

audience relations were viewed by the RVOG planners.

It was in December 1960 that the Norwegian clergyman, Gudmund Gjelsten, took up his position as the first full-time audience relations officer at the station in Addis Ababa. In the following four years he and his successor, Rev'd. Paul Volz, made an extensive and thorough ground-work in this vital area of the RVOG ministry.

The Shaping of a "Model"

Two major tasks awaited Gudmund Gjelsten when he took up his position. He should draw up the first contours of the RVOG potential audience and work out a "model" for functional audience relations work within the broadcasting ministry.

In the course of 1961 he gathered and compiled demographical data and background information on social conditions, educational standards, political and religious situations in the various RVOG target areas.

This first compilation of facts and background information was considered only tentative and it was assumed that the area studios should take on the responsibility for an ongoing "in-operation research" which should aim at a closer relation and interaction with an actual audience.

Gjelsten's second major task was to spell out in more detail how the envisated model for audience relations should work. During the first half of 1962 he developed a 35-page document called "Audience Relations Handbook". This was intended as a guide and "idea-bank" for the studios, at the same time as it should provide for certain uniformity in this important work. In his report to the General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 1963, Aske described the plan, which had been worked out by Gjelsten, in the following way: "Audience research and audience relations have been built into staff and station structure ... As we move into active broadcasting, the research will be geared to the actual needs. Program promotion will be - as indeed basic audience research - a cooperative effort by the area studios and the station. Follow-up activities will take a decentralized approach, aiming at guiding the interested listener into contact with the living church in his home community. Proselytizing for our own church is banned." (LWF/BS Report 1957-1963:18). In this statement Aske made it clear

that the main responsibility for audience relations rested with the local churches and that there should be a non-proselytizing follow-up.

Administrative Problems

In the second half of 1962 and the following year, both area studios and the station seem to have been so preoccupied with programming and broadcasting that very little attention could be given to implementation of the audience relations work.In mid-1964, Gjelsten's term of service was up and his successor, Paul Volz, took up this position in May that year. Volz had served as Director of the Lutheran Hour recording studio at Uyo in Eastern Nigeria and was an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the USA.

Through extensive field visits, he made an effort to speed up implementation of the plan for audience relations work at the studio level. In his annual report for 1964, he said that four of the area studios had already a full-time person set aside for this work and two others had part-time workers. He also pointed out that almost all studio and program directors were involved in some aspects of audience relations work. At the Studio Directors' Conference in May 1965, the question of audience relations was given special attention. All studios had been asked to prepare special reports on the status of their activities in this field.

From these reports, it is clear that all studios had initiated certain activities in audience relations. Promotion and listener mail seem to dominate the picture. Some Studio Directors reported on visitations to local congregations to given information about the radio work and to distribute promotion material. Others reported that pastors and contact persons had been enlisted for regular audience relations work. A few studios had at that time also set up special offices or departments for audience relations.

In summing up the reports and the ensuing discussion on this subject at the conference, Paul Volz said: "In general the responses received indicate that all studios realize the importance of audience relations, but usually they are too busy getting the message on the air". He also reminded the Studio Directors that the timing was important. "The studios as well as the station must know the audience in order to know what and how to speak to it", he said. (Studio Directors' Conference, 1965: Report).

In September of the same year, Paul Volz was made Assistant General Director of LWF/BS, and the audience relations office was left vacant.

As no replacement for Volz was found, the station leadership became more and more concerned. In his annual report to the 1966 Board meeting, the Program Director, Ulrich Fick, expressed deep concern and said: "Part of the present pressure on audience relations work originates undoubtedly from the fact that the station was up to now not in the position to fully live up to the necessary activity in this field ... the studios need guidance and appointment of a new audience relations officer is urgent." (LWF/BS.B.a.1960: Report p.10).

The years went by and the audience relations position at the station remained vacant. In 1969, Paul Volz, who in the meantime had been appointed RVOG Director, was deeply concerned. He pointed out that RVOG was operating in the dark, because the station did not know who was listening, if any. (LWF/BS.B.a.1969: Report p.4).

New Efforts

In December 1969 the LWF/BS Executive Committee authorized a restructuring of the administrative set-up at the station and the Department of Audience Research and Planning was established, as we have mentioned earlier. (cf.supra, p.98). In his annual report to the Board for the year 1970, Aske recalled that RVOG originally was not meant to be "institution-oriented, but person-oriented", and said: "In recognition of this fundamental philosophy RVOG appointed an audience relations officer before it even appointed a program director (1960). In each of the studios we urged the cooperating churches to provide a similar position. After a period in which audience relations efforts at the station were unfortunately neglected, RVOG last year restructured the station set-up to provide for a new Department on Audience Research and Planning." (LWF/BS.B.a.1971:3).

Aske underlined in his brief summary of the developments that the new efforts to reactivate the audience relations work at the station in fact were in line with the original philosophy of RVOG. He did not, however, give any explanation to why there had been a period of five years when this work had been neglected by the station, nor had there been any such explanation given earlier during this period. Whatever the real reasons may have been,

it must be regretted that at the most crucial time in the broadcasting ministry, when the potential audience should be turned into an active and participatory audience, the station was not in the position to give the churches and the studios the assistance they needed.

At the same time it must also be underlined that the shortcomings of the station in this respect did not mean a collaps of the audience relations work at the studio level. Even if no large and systematic research schemes were undertaken and even if much more could have been done, the official reports from this period indicate that there was a considerable activity and interaction between the studios and their audiences. It is clear that the studios did their best in spite of the fact that both station assistance and church backing were weak.

In 1973 the long vacancy at the station was filled when Bernhardur Gudmundsson took up his position as Audience Relations Officer. This meant a new beginning of this vital function of the radio station.

3.3.2. Audience Research

The early model of the audience relations work which Gjelsten presented in the AR Handbook had already made it clear that audience research was not a luxury, nor was it an independent activity - an academic exercise only. It should rather be seen as an indispensible and integral part of the overall audience relations work. The term "research" was used in a broad sense and included all efforts to get information about the listeners, their listening habits and reactions to programs, as well as listening conditions. What Gjelsten had in mind was an "in-operation research", including all aspects of the radio ministry at the reception end.

Gjelsten was fully aware of the financial and personnel requirements for this kind of research, but he still insisted that it was something which the radio ministry could not afford to do without. "Research must be an integral part of the picture when planning the work of production studio staff and when allotting the budget.",he said. (AF. Handbook 1962:1)

In order to rightly appreciate the efforts made on the area studio level to implement ongoing audience relations, including "in-operation research"

it may be helpful to first recall the realities in which it should be carried out and the obstacles which had to be overcome.

Realities and Obstacles

At the time when RVOG went into operation, Christian broadcasters in general did not consider audience research particularly important. The history of religious broadcasting shows that Christian radio stations too often and too long operated on intuition rather than facts about their listeners.

The reasons for this were probably many, but the most obvious were financial limitations and lack of expertise. There were, however, also reasons of a more principle nature which made many Christian broadcasters reluctant to engage in research. James Kushner observes that "audience research has only begun to come to age among religious broadcasters, many of whom still consider it a luxury, if they give it any thought at all". (Kushner, 1976:203).

Ferdinand Baglo also refers to "reluctance in certain ecclesiastical and theological circles to engage in this kind of research." He says that the basic argument is that the Gospel cannot be marketed like some consumer product. He quotes the well-known missiologist and theologian, Hendrik Kraemer's, statement: "The search for successful communication has no biblical justification. Only faithful communication has". Responding to Kraemer, John Bachman did not dispute but qualify that statement by asking the following questions: "Is it appropriate for a Christian broadcaster to engage in research? Or, by carrying out such studies, do we disregard the work of the Holy Spirit and exaggerate human efforts? By surveying audiences do we automatically succumb to secular tendency to treat persons as objects?" Bachman's conclusion was, according to Baglo, that for faithful Christian communication formal research is indispensible. (Baglo, op.cit.p.93-94).

The thinking expressed by Bachman was in line with the understanding of audience research which was adopted for the RVOG ministry from the beginning. The main difficulties and obstacles which the RVOG research had to overcome were therefore not of a principle nature, but had basically to do with three hard realities, namely: finances, personnel and cultural/contextual diversities among the listeners.

Regular and large-scale surveys were expensive undertakings. The annual financial reports of the station also show that up to 1971 RVOG did not allot any sizable amount for research in its budget. The area studios were also hard up for funds and could not afford expensive research schemes. Following the establishment of DARP in 1970, the situation improved and between 1972 and 1976 the average annual amount voted for this purpose was US$ 14,000. In this amount personnel and station administration services were not included.

Apart from finances, shortage of staff sufficiently trained to conduct surveys which would yield reliable results was also a problem at the station, as well as at the studios. The long vacancy in the audience relations office at the station is not only an example of this but may be the main reason for the slow development in this area of the radio ministry. The establishment of DARP meant a definite improvement at all levels of the audience relations and especially with regard to research, as we shall see further on.

The complexity in surveying the RVOG audience had to do with the many variables in its composition. Educational, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and political under-currents made it extremely difficult to design meaningful survey instruments and to interpret the results.

It is against this background of contemporary realities and obstacles the RVOG audience research efforts must be seen and evaluated.

Research at the Area Studio Level

From the official records and reports we learn that most studios were engaged in research schemes of various kinds. Several studios conducted special surveys prior to or at the start of broadcasting. In his annual report for 1964, the station Audience Relations Officer, Paul Volz, said that the Jabalpur and the Vijayawada studios in India and the Teheran studio in Iran had made such surveys, and that "plans were laid for more extensive research in 1965."The same year a mini-survey of the medium wave audience in Addis Ababa was also carried out. (LWF/BS.B.a.1965:AR. report). Beginning in November 1965, the Studio Director and the Audience Relations Officer of the Ngaoundéré studio in Cameroun made a three months field tour of the entire Fulani area in the West African countries to get to know the audience prior to starting program production. (Studio report 1965).

Post-broadcast surveys to learn about the actual listeners and their reaction to the programs were carried out in the following years by several studios. In the above-mentioned report by Paul Volz in 1965, six studios are listed as having conducted small-scale surveys which are described in the following way: "For the most part their surveys were limited to small sampling of listeners and dealt chiefly with program evaluation and listening habits. Most of these efforts helped to verify staff members' opinions on their audiences and give some indication as to which programs were most appreciated". (AR Report 1965:3). In 1966 the Teheran studio made a study of their audience which made it clear that the majority of their listeners were young people with good education. (Studio report 1967). The following year a more extensive survey was conducted by the Beirut studio which gave a fairly clear profile of their audience in the whole Arabic language area. (Studio report 1968).

These are only examples of the kind of surveys the studios conducted in the early years of operation. Many more such small-scale research undertakings could be mentioned. Considering this fact there seems to be reason to challenge Van Deusen's statement that "the program outlined by Cjelsten in his Handbook fell short of fulfilment by the studios." (Van Deusen, op.cit. p.113). It is true that more could have been done, but what was done appears to be more significant than has generally been recognized.

Research at the Station Level

Apart from regular and systematic compilation and analysis of monitoring reports from the various target areas by the Technical Department, no real research was undertaken by the station for almost ten years from the initial surveys made in 1961. The setting up of DARP in 1970 was a belated attempt to make up for what had been neglected so long.

Defining the purpose of this new unit it was said: "The department will be primarily concerned with audience research and relations - research will be undertaken in order to obtain and analyse important data on RVOG actual and potential listeners and to submit documented recommendations for professional broadcasting and follow-up. (LWF/BS.B.a.1971: DARP report).

The first major research undertaking by DARP was an extensive survey of the Ethiopian audience. This survey which covered the entire country was carried out in 1971. Trained interviewers completed not less than 20.000 questionnaires. Not only was the scope of this study large, the objectives were also broad which contributed to a comprehensive picture of the Ethiopian audience.

The following year, a share in a commercial multi-client survey in Kenya was purchased by RVOG. The purpose of doing that was to find out to what extent people in Kenya listened to RVOG. This survey was of special interest because there was no program production studio in Kenya and no directly related church which meant that there was no regular promotion and no follow-up was done, but the country was right in the centre of the East Africa beam and both English and Swahili programs could be heard there.

In 1973/74 the LWF/ES office in Geneva compiled basic data on all RVOG target areas. This compilation was done by Marc Chambron and was intended to serve as background information and reference in program planning in the various areas. The report was published in 1974.

The same year DARP launched an extensive field research in Tanzania. Like the Ethiopia survey in 1971, this was also a random sample study, but limited to only 3.200 respondents. It was carried out in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) and with the Moshi studio. The survey was designed for the particular social structure in the Tanzanian society. Some critical questions have been raised as to whether the result, due to this methodology, gave a correct picture of the actual size and profile of the audience.

Findings and the Use of Them

Detailed reports on the findings from all these research undertakings were put together and made available to those concerned. It would take us too far to attempt any summary of the findings, but it was clearly documented that RVOG had a sizable and sustained audience in both Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Out of 19.600 Amharic speaking respondents in Ethiopia, 5.225 said that they listened daily to the Amharic programs from RVOG. 5.900 said that they listened almost daily. This means that over 50 per cent of the respondents

tuned in RVOG daily or almost daily. The preliminary report of the Tanzania survey showed that 63 per cent of the respondents listened fairly regularly to the Swahili programs. There is, however, some uncertainty about this last figure. Results from the Kenya survey showed, as expected, lower figures because there was no regular promotion. Here the Swahili audience was estimated to 18,4 per cent, whilst the English listeners seem to be very few.

The reactivation of audience research within the RVOG broadcasting ministry as of the early part of the 1970's must also be related to the LWF Task Force on Mass Communication. In its report which was ready in 1972, research was lifted up as one of the activities which needed more attention. This matter was taken up in not less than four different sections in the report. "Ongoing systematic research and critical evaluation should be an essential part of thinking and action on church communication," it was said. (Task Force Report 1972:3). Research is, however, of little use if it remains an academic exercise. The ultimate purpose of audience research in media work is to bring about an interactive communication where the audience is participating in the communication process. We shall therefore give special attention to this aspect.

3.3.3. Audience Participation

Meaningful media communication is never a one-sided and action-centred approach. It is always an interplay between people. In Christian broadcasting this interaction has often been reduced to "follow-up" and the participatory aspect has been largely overlooked.

To begin with the audience was not seen as a resource and the studios were not encouraged to consider the audience a partner in an interactive communication. It seems fair to say that conceptually the participatory role of the audience in the RVOG ministry was at this stage largely overlooked and seems to have remained so for a considerable period of time. It was the Task Force study which, in 1972, among other things called attention to the interactive aspect of media communication. It is possible that this concept had been developing over a period of time, but it was in the Task Force Report it surfaced and began to make an impact.

The Director of DARP, Menkir Esayas, picked up this thinking and said in his annual report 1973: "During the last ten years RVOG has been mainly involved in the proclamation aspect on behalf of the churches. The time

has come now when RVOG has to be involved in the communication aspect." (LWF/BS.B.a.1973:DARP report). He has further stressed this point in later writings and said: "Comparatively little attention has been given to the interactive process of communication or to having audience participate in designing the communication effort." (Esayas 1981:1).

We find here a certain conceptual development within RVOG from action-centred audience relations work towards a relation in interaction where the audience is seen as a contributing partner in the communication process.

It would, however, be a mistake to draw the conclusion that it also functioned the same way on the practical level. Reports and other documents from the early years of the broadcasting ministry indicate that there was an ongoing exchange or interaction on the area studio level between the audience and the studio staff all the time. To what extent this had any real impact on the broadcasting ministry is difficult to say, but it seems as there would be a case for a re-evaluation of assessments made earlier. We shall briefly look at some of these indications.

Listener Mail

It is obvious that listener mail was from the beginning the main form of contact between the audience and studio staff. The frequency and volume of this mail varied greatly from studio to studio. Some reported hundreds of letters per month while others received only a few hundred per year. Since this obviously had to do with realities such as literacy rates and postal services in a given area, the volume had only a relative value as an indication of size and composition of the audience. Each letter received had, however, a value as far as it was a feedback and provided a contact which could be followed up and developed into an interactive communication. The mail had also some value as research material from which certain information about thelistener could be deduced if rightly analysed, as we shall see in the following pages.

There are no regular and easily comparable reports available on listener mail and how it was handled. We can therefore only give a few examples which indicate the interplay between studio and audience in this respect.

The table below is incomplete both with regard to the area studios and the statistics. The figures indicate, however, the volume of mail received at some of the studios and the increase in received mail in the period given.

Table 1: Volume of listener mail

Studio	1966	1970	1974
Jabalpur, India (Hindi)	4.588	5.498	2.163
Madras, India (Tamil)	8.329	8.725	19.076
Vijayawada, India (Telugu)	-	1.157	1.560
Teheran, Iran (Farsi)	442	1.000	-
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Y.D. Amharic)	-	4.600	9.000
Jos, Nigeria (Hausa)	-	5.773	-
Ngaoundéré, Cameroun (Fulfulde)	-	315	575
Uyo, Nigeria (English)	-	1.591	2.111 (1972)
Moshi, Tanzania (Swahili)	4.000 (?)	6.000 (?)	-
RVOG Station (SW) (English & French)	-	137	618
RVOG Station (MW) (English & French)	-	103	537

Occasional analyses of the mail was done by some of the studios which gave some interesting information about the listeners.

The Jabalpur studio reported in 1966 that 85 per cent of the letters that year came from non-Christians. The following year the ratio had dropped to 75 per cent. That year the letters also indicated that they had listeners not only in India, but out of the letters received, 1.731 came from listeners in 27 other countries.

From Teheran it was reported in 1969 that 99 per cent of the letters came from non-Christians. Many other studios reported also from time to time that a great portion of listeners'responses came from non-Christians.

All such information was most valuable for the studios, but even more important than who wrote in to the studios was what they wrote. In 1971 RVOG published a small booklet called "Listen to Listeners". This publication contains 275 quotations from letters received at the various RVOG studios between 1966 and 1970. 20% of these quotations express appreciation of programs, 25% are comments and suggestions which can be classified as direct feedback, while 43% are of a more general nature and can be seen as indirect feedback. The remaining 12% were requests for Christian literature.

Since these are selected quotations, they cannot be taken to reflect mail content in general,but they do indicate that there was a feedback which should not be underestimated. Studio reports give only a few and very vague indications of the type of letters received. An analysis of 4.588 letters received at the Jabalpur studio in 1966 showed that only about 6% could be classified as direct feedback. A similar analysis was made of mail received at the station in Addis Ababa in 1974, and this showed that about 11% were comments and suggestions.

To be able to determine to what extent letters from listeners were a real contribution to the radio ministry much more research is needed.

We do not have enough information on how the mail was handled to draw definite conclusions about the extent to which comments and suggestions from listeners were fed into program planning and production. It seems most likely that the flow of letters was in the first place taken as encouragement and used as an opening of a dialogue with the listener. Reports indicate that incoming mail was not just filed. Paul Volz said in his annual report 1965 that the studios processed more mail than the incoming letters which indicates that there was an ongoing correspondence. In several studio reports it is also said that those who had written in to the studio received personal letters in reply. In addition to this routine it must also be assumed that letters commenting on programs or giving suggestions were shared with concerned producers.

It is also obvious that listener mail was considered to have a "research value". Certain information about the audience could be deduced from the mail. It has therefore sometimes been classified as "informal research" material. (R.Senzig, quotation Kushner 1976:208). The danger was, however, to overdo the analysis of this material and over utilize the findings or even misuse them for publicity purposes. Baglo refers to such overdoing of undocumented statistics within the RVOG ministry. In that context he quotes a general statement by John Bachman where he has said: "Too often in Christian broadcasting we conduct pseudo-research and then twist the findings for promotional purposes." (Baglo 1972:100).

Even if there were such incidents, there are reasons to believe that listener mail both initiated interactive communication in a dialogue form and contributed to the program output.

Promotion

The "marketing" aspect of the radio ministry was essential for the whole operation. There were basically two objectives which had to be achieved. One was to make the broadcasts known to a desired audience. The other had to do with fund-raising and a sustained support of the work financially as well as spiritually through information and prayer. The main responsibility for program promotion rested with the area studios and the local churches. They were expected to both produce and distribute promotion material.

Two problems seem to have limited the effect of promotion efforts on the local level. One was shortage of funds for publicity which made it necessary to basically use church publications and channels which meant that large segments of society were never reached. Advertising in secular press and printing of attractive posters to be placed in public places could usually not be afforded. (Baglo 1972:95). The other weakness was apparently the Western style of promotion which often did not attract nor fit into the traditional communication systems. More efforts ought to have been made to adapt promotion to existing channels of communication in the different areas.

The Audience Relations Officer, Bernharður Guðmundsson, took important initiatives here too, which helped the studios in the "marketing" of their programs.

Promotion for support was the responsibility of the station and the two partners in the radio project. No real assessment has been made of the "marketing" of RVOG for the purpose of support. Regular progress reports, special articles in church publications as well as occasional promotion campaigns in certain countries seem to have been the most common avenues used for promotion of RVOG in Europe and the United States. Pamphlets and hand-outs with information about the station and its broadcasting ministry were also published over the years. A couple of films, slide series and recorded tapes were also produced for promotion purposes. In addition to these efforts a regular "RVOG Newsletter" was published four times a year which was distributed to some 800 subscribers.

In 1975 the Board approved a 3-year project for promotion and publicity. It was felt that new material had to be produced and US$ 47,000 were voted for this purpose. A full-time person, Niels Thure Krarup from Denmark, was made in charge of this project. (LWF/COC.m.1975:17). Before any substantial production of new material was done, the station was nationalized and all material under preparation was confiscated.

Follow-up

As early as in 1958 when the radio project was approved, LWF/CWM members expressed concern regarding an effective follow-up. It was suggested that "radio committees in the local churches in Asia and Africa should develop a pattern of follow-up work which was different from that used by the LUTHERAN HOUR in Japan and elsewhere." (LWF/CWM.m.1958:16). The minutes do not indicate in what way it should be different or how it should be planned. In the following years the same question was raised on several occasions which shows how important it was viewed to be.

Consistant with the whole concept of a decentralized radio ministry, the local churches were expected to assume the main responsibility for the follow-up work, and the station should stand ready to assist them.(LWF/CWM.a.1959:Exh.C.3).

We have also mentioned earlier that the follow-up work was not seen as a narrow denominational attempt to bring people into the LWF "fold". Aske stated very clearly: "Proselytizing for our own church is banned". (LWF/BS Report 1957-1963:18).

The "model" for audience relations, of which follow-up was seen as a central activity, had been worked out and presented, but the local churches which should carry the main responsibility were not ready. Robert Van Deusen makes the following comment regarding this situation: "In most of the areas the indigenous churches had not become sufficiently aware of the potential of radio in making contact with people to bring about involvement of pastors, teachers and other lay leaders in a vigorous follow-up program." (Van Deusen 1968:113).

We are here again touching the question of structural and conceptual integration of churches into media communication. (cf.supra, p.163). The follow-up work in the RVOG ministry did not develop as planned. The local churches were conceptually not so integrated into the radio project that they were in the position to fully assume their role at the same time as the station failed in giving them the assistance they needed and expected.

It is true that much more should and could have been done, but the activities carried out on the local studio level in the field of audience relations, small scale surveys and follow-up work,were certainly more significant than many thought they were.

Audience Participation

We have already seen how listener mail initiated a dialogue between studio staff and listeners. On the basis of what we know about the content of this mail we have also said that there is reason to assume that it contributed to the program output. In some areas it seems as the audience participation also took other forms and was of a more substantive nature. A few examples may serve as illustrations of this.

In the 1964 annual report from the Beirut studio is a list of "out-door" recording sessions. Eighty-two days were spent on 18 such sessions in six different locations in the Middle East. Not less than 500 people participated in these recording sessions. The South Africa studio reported the same year about "recording safaries" which had been very rewarding and effective.

From Madagascar it was also reported the same year that "students from the government Lycée came to offer their services" and that various people in the church had helpedin programming. There are similar reports from later years and from other area studios as well.

There is no question that Esayas and Pick are right when they point out that program production was done in relative isolation (cf.supra, p.177). At the same time we should not overlook the fact that there was also a considerable interaction which took different forms in different studios. Out-door recordings and the use of the individual listeners in program production were practised in many areas. "Radio Clubs" was another form for audience participation, particularly in India. The purpose of these clubs was not only to come together for group-listening but also to discuss the programs and report their reactions and suggestions back to the studio.

It is in light of these activities and observations that audience participation at least in some areas seems to have been of more significance than generally recognized.

3.4. Training and Conscientization

Christian radio stations have often been accused of a low professional standard and of keeping a high ratio of expatriate staff in key positions. Discussing personnel as one of the problem areas in the religious broadcasting station in Africa, James Kushner makes the following general statement: "For many years the level of professional broadcast qualification at the stations was low. Few off-site training opportunities existed for local employees and those who did achieve any proficiency quickly received well-paid job offers from the public and private sector.". At the same time he admits that efforts to improve the situation have been made, but that much remains to be done. (Kushner, op.cit.p.146).

We have earlier mentioned that both Van Deusen and Baglo have directly and indirectly touched on the same problem. The observation made by Menkir Esayas that "few efforts have been made to decolonize the Western model of communication", (Esayas 1981:43) has also to do with these problems. A prolonged dominance of expatriate leadership in broadcasting institutions and a low professional standard among indigenous personnel makes the Western model of communication prevail. It is here that intensive and systematic training at all levels becomes such a crucial question.

The two issues mentioned above were of great concern to the partners in the RVOG project from the very beginning. At the time when NECC became "Party B", the training of radio workers in Beirut had been going on for several years. (cf.supra, p.14). For "Party A", training of radio workers was also a priority from the beginning. (LWF/CWM.a.1959:Edh.C.3).

The training task of RVOG was not only urgent, it was also a complex multi-field and multi-level undertaking which included all the technical branches, programming, journalism and administration. It was further complicated because of the divergent educational and cultural background of the trainees. To adequately train sufficient indigenous personnel to replace expatriate staff was therefore a long and very demanding process. To this came also the vast field of awareness building and conscientization of church leaders which was not fully recognized to begin with, but turned out to be a demanding educational task.

3.4.1. Administrative Developments

"Even before the first brick was put into place in any RVOG-related building, the training of personnel from areas of broadcasting was on the agenda as an integral part of RVOG's task." This was pointed out by Aske when he in 1965 pleaded for more resources to speed up the training of radio workers. (LWF/BS.B.B.a.1965:5). In the meantime RVOG had secured the use of training facilities which the Ministry of Telecommunication(IBTE) had in Addis Ababa. In the Agreement which was signed with the Ethiopian Government in February 1961, a clause to this effect had been included.This was also done before the first brick was put into place in any of the RVOG buildings. At the Board meeting in 1961 the urgency of training and employment of indigenous personnel was again stressed. (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:4).

Shaping of the Training Unit

In the following years it seems to have been taken for granted that each administrative unit at the station as well as each area studio should take care of their training needs. No comprehensive, long-range planning was done until 1965 when the Board was approached with an ambitious plan to establish a training department at the studio.

Aske took up the question in his annual report and said: "As to training, this is an area where we must do something constructive, and do it soon ... It certainly by now has become fearfully clear that perhaps the over-riding concern, for the next few years at least, will be that of securing adequately trained radio personnel both for the station and for the studios." (LWF/BS. B.a.1965:7).

A special "Staff Working Paper" on training was also presented at the same meeting. In this document the training efforts upto that time were reviewed and it was pointed out that in order to meet the urgent needs for qualified personnel, the task of training had to be tackled more vigorously.

Three alternative models for how to do this were then presented. The first alternative envisaged only a roving team of two trainers who should regularly visit the studios and conduct workshops. The other two models envisaged both resident training at the station and a team for itinerary training at the studios. It was estimated that upto seven full-time trainers might be needed.

In the ensuing discussion the CCIB chairman, Dr. Carpenter, raised objections to the proposal. He argued that cultural differences would make it difficult to have an integrated training and that the proposed arrangement would further reinforce the already too station-centred operation. "CCIB wants to do training in the field", he said, and pointed out that CCIB would not be interested in sharing the cost for a training department at the station. (LWF/BS.B.m.1965:7).

After a lengthy discussion, the Board took the following action: "Subject to adequate budget provision, the LWF/BS Board authorizes the establishment of a special department within Radio Voice of the Gospel for the purpose of training radio personnel and that initially three people be assigned for this work of the training department ..." (LWF/BS.B.m.1965:9).

This action was never implemented. "Adequate budget provision" was apparently never made. In the following years training efforts continued as previously. Reports from this time do not indicate any change. The station continued to assist the studios in finding suitable training opportunities and by providing scholarships.

"Party B" also carried out training schemes and gave substantial aid to the Africa Literature Centre at Mindolo, Zambia and the AACC Training Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. "Party A" also made use of these institutions and gave financial aid towards the running of them.

The plan to have a special department for training at the station came back in a different form in 1969 when the Department of Audience Research and Planning (DARP) was authorized.(cf.supra p.98) In the following years the "Extension Services" section of DARP developed an elaborate training activity which in fact covered all the areas discussed at the 1965 meeting in Jerusalem.

3.4.2. Training Programs

The RVOG training efforts were all the time marked by flexibility. The schemes were tailor-made for specific situations. The needs determined priorities and available resources determined extent and scope of the programs. The efforts in training can be grouped into the following types:
On-the-job training was the broadest and the least systematic for upgrading of proficiency at the lower levels of staff positions. Reports from the early years of the broadcasting ministry indicate that this type of training was a common practice. Aske said in his report for 1964: "Both at the station and at each studio, on-the-job training is now part of the daily routine". (LWF/BS, B.a.1965:7). In the above-mentioned "Staff Working Paper" on training it was also mentioned that all new staff members were given on-the-job training to begin with.
In-service training was a more systematic way of securing qualified personnel. The Technical Department began with regular in-service courses as soon as operations started. In 1964, Kraemer already reported that he was training two engineering assistants, and said that "by 1970 the supervisors in the Technical Department can all be nationals with perhaps a foreign advisor". (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:report p.2). In 1966 he reported that the efforts in training nationals had begun to bear fruit, and the following year he could inform the Board that "Ethiopian staff is ably covering all the routine operations and maintenance shifts.". (LWF/BS.B.a.1966/67 reports).

In-service training was done in three different ways. There was regular class instruction over a longer period which lead up to an examination. There were also correspondence courses which the station provided and paid for. The study of these courses was done under supervision and successfully accomplished courses resulted in upgrading of salary and in due time also promotion. The third way of giving in-service training was concentrated work-shops. Such workshops were arranged both at the station and at the area studios.

Itinerary training staff became more and more in demand and the last few years, before the nationalization, DARP had four full-time consultant/ trainers in its Extension Services section. Most of the production and technical workshops were arranged at the various studios or regionally. Some more specialized workshops and internships for special students were arranged at the station.

Resident Training given at various academic and professional institutions in Africa as well as overseas aimed at qualifying indigenous personnel for supervisory and leading positions in the various branches of the operation.

This type of training started by the enrolment of five young students in the IBTE Technical College in Addis Ababa as early as in 1961. (LWF/BS.B.a.1961:4). They graduated two years later and four of them were employed as supervisors in the Technical Department.

In the following years a number of students were sent to overseas universities for graduate studies in various fields. Many were also sent to professional training institutions both in and outside Africa. The AACC Training Centre in Nairobi was frequently used for basic training in program production and RVOG provided not only scholarships but also teaching staff for these courses during several years.

The results of this higher professional and academic training are reflected in the gradual shift in leadership in the various branches of the operation at the station as well as in the studios. The fact that three of five department heads at RVOG were Africans and ten out of fourteen studio directors were nationals at the time when the station was nationalized shows that the training efforts had not been in vain. (cf.supra, p.106, 175).

Scholarship Funds

International scholarship funds of LWF, WCC and WACC as well as other church-related agencies gave substantial assistance to the RVOG efforts to accomplish its task in training of radio workers. Without their assistance the process of replacing expatriates with qualified nationals would have taken much more time.

The Broadcasting Service itself also increased the financial resources for training the last few years. In 1974 the Board authorized the setting up of a special RVOG Scholarship Fund with an initial amount of US$ 17,000 for 1975. (LWF/BS.B.m.1974:13). Two years later, at the initiative of Marc Chambron, a central "Communication Training Fund" (CTF) was established and an amount of US$ 60,000 was voted for 1977. (LWF/COC.m.1976:45). The establishment of CTF was prompted by the experience over the years in training personnel for RVOG, and was, in the new situation with expanding activities in Christian communication, intended to serve all communication programs within LWF.

The prime purpose of all efforts in training radio workers at all levels was, of course, to get qualified personnel for the RVOG broadcasting ministry. These efforts had, however, as we have mentioned earlier, a "spill-over" into the public and private sector outside RVOG as well. Even if it was painful to see people leave the RVOG service after having received training, it should not be seen as a failure. Training of radio workers was a partial fulfilment of the stated purpose even when the result was taken over by society.

Menkir Esayas indicated this broader understanding of training when he said: "More than in any other way can RVOG be said to have made a continental impact when its services are invested in the development of manpower resources." (LWF/BS.B.a.1972:DARP report, p.6). Ferdinand Baglo made the same reflection when he considered this problem. He said: "This may be accepted as a by-product of the RVOG training program - to prepare men for work as Christians in the secular mass media field.". At the same time he pointed out that the root-cause to this problem, which, in his opinion, was the salary question, had to be looked into and resolved. (Baglo 1972:112).

3.4.3. Media Awareness-Building in the Church

The low level of church involvement in the radio ministry was a constant concern among the RVOG leadership, as we have seen in previous sections. This fundamental principle of the radio project was in jeopardy because the churches had not realized the potential of media communication and what their role should be. The structural integration of them in the radio ministry was not matched by a conceptual integration.

At a church consultation organized by the Department of Church Cooperation of the LWF in 1973 at Arusha, Tanzania, this question was raised by the Director of DARP, Menkir Esayas. He pointed out in his lecture that the church in Africa had to do something definite in order not to be by-passed by the technological developments. A special working group was assigned to study this question. As a result of the deliberations in this group, a number of recommendations were formulated and presented to the conference. The recommendations were adopted and it was agreed that new efforts should be made to sensitize the church leaders at all levels and to bring about a more active involvement in the broadcasting ministry. It was also agreed that the possibility of arranging basic training courses in media communication at the theological seminaries should be considered. Such courses should aim at preparing the future leadership of the churches for a more active participation in media communication.

Following that meeting, RVOG/DARP made great efforts to follow up on this matter. One of the consultant/trainers, the Norwegian theologian and broadcaster, Reidar Elsebutangen, was assigned to work out the curricula for this kind of training course at the theological seminaries. Experimental courses were also held in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Madagascar in the following years. Church/media consultations were also arranged in several areas. These consultations brought together church leaders and media people for open discussion on practical issues related to the broadcasting ministry. These talks were most helpful and appreciated by both media and church people.

Encouraged by these initiatives and based on the RVOG experience, similar church/media consultations were later organized and sponsored by the LWF Office of Communication in several areas, even after the nationalization of RVOG.

5.5. RVOG and the Understanding of Its Role

Having dealt with the various aspects of the RVOG broadcasting ministry, and followed developments of its different activities, the question of whether the radio project turned out to be what originally was envisaged has to be asked. To what extent did RVOG play the role it was intended to play in the mission of the Church? Did RVOG develop in the way it was expected to develop? How did the conception of RVOG's role and function develop over the years?

To answer these and similar questions satisfactorily, a more extensive analysis of expectations and actual developments than is possible in this study, has to be made. We shall here only be able to indicate how the original understanding of RVOG's role was tested in confrontation with realities, and how constant efforts were made to make use of available facilities in the most effective way. We shall try to point out here how developments of media communication in general, Christian radio broadcasting in particular and the experience of the RVOG operation itself, moulded and refined the understanding of its role.

3.5.1. Early Role Conceptions Were Tested

We recall how church and mission leaders were fascinated by the potential which shortwave radio seemed to have for an effective missionary outreach and evangelization of the non-Christian world in the 1950's. We have several times in previous sections of this study referred to the early conviction that this medium should make it possible for the Church to reach further with the Gospel message than had been possible so far with traditional means and methods.

These expectations seem to have prevailed for some time in spite of certain discouraging experiences. In his report to the Board in August 1964, Aske said that RVOG had presented the participating churches with a challenge to evangelize and communicate with the non-Christian world. "The programs are finding open ears behind closed doors", he said. (LWF/BS.B.a.1964:7).

The early concept of radio as an effective instrument in missionary outreach was, however, soon confronted with hard realities. The programs produced by local studios turned out to be, to a large extent, geared to a church audience rather than to a non-Christian. Aske's fear that RVOG could "degenerate into an extremely expensive international Christian house-telephone" turned out to be more relevant than some thought it was.

The Program Director, Ulrich Fick, said in his report the same year: "The evangelistic programs very seldom reach out to a non-Christian audience ... The message does not meet life ... There is reason to doubt that a non-Christian listener too often will continue to listen ..." (LWF/BS.B.a. 1964: report). In the following years the same trend in programming continued, as we have mentioned earlier. (cf.supra.190). The RVOG leadership began to

question whether direct evangelism outreach to a non-Christian audience was the primary role which RVOG should play.

In a study paper presented at the LWF Executive Committee 1969 on "The Role of LWF/BS", Aske described his understanding of evangelism by radio. He said that in simplistic terms there were two types of Christian radio programming. One was the "hard-sell" evangelism which he classified as "a fundamentalistic, American model ... rather dominant in missionary use of mass media". The other was the "climate creating programming ... with a long range goal and which are simply geard to produce good-will." Aske considered that the RVOG position was "somewhere between" these two. (LWF/EC.a.1969:Study document, p.4).

We note here, for the first time, a certain "play-down" of the understanding of RVOG as an instrument in world evangelization. The objective was still the same. RVOG was there to serve in the mission of the Church, but the statement indicates that there was a need to more clearly define RVOG's role and function.

It was also at the same meeting that the LWF Task Force on Mass Communication was appointed. The assignment given to that study team of five international communication and media experts was to do just that. The job description included:

"1) To analyse the potential and actual importance of LWF's mass media operations, especially RVOG and the Far East Broadcasting Offices.
2) To evaluate the place, function and role of these units.
3) To attempt to propose priorities ..." (LWF/EC.m.1969).

The need for a thorough review of old conceptions and assumptions in Christian radio broadcasting was not anything unique for LWF at that time. The rapid developments in media technology, together with experiences and research findings, with regard to the effectiveness and limitations of media, had resulted in uncertainty about their use and usefulness.

This uncertainty was reflected in the document on "The Church and the Media of Mass communication" which was adopted at the WCC General Assembly at Uppsala in 1968. In a closing paragraph the following was said: "The world of media of mass communication is so new and often so bewildering to the

churches that we are only starting to probe its significance, possibilities, perversions and use for good". (WCC Assembly Report 1968: Appendix XI).

The same uncertainty was also expressed in the LWF Task Force report four years later. In an introductory paragraph it was said: "A description of the actual situation of 'church and communication' will offer the two-fold picture of the increasing importance of communication in all aspects of the church's life and work along with a major uncertainty as to how to implement this." (Task Force Report 1972:1).

The Task Force study can be seen as a turning point in the general understanding of RVOG's role and function, but before we give more attention to this important study, we shall briefly mention some of the critical views and assessments of Christian radio broadcasting at that point in the history of RVOG.

3.5.2. Some Contemporary Assessments of Christian Radio Broadcasting

The use of modern communication media for missionary purposes became an increasingly controversial issue during the two decades when RVOG was in operation. Serious questions were raised, not only as to how media should be used, but also as to the involvement of the Church in mass media communication. In 1972, the former Director of the Studio at Moshi in Tanzania, Ferdinand Baglo, presented his thesis "Radio Voice of the Gospel - A Decade of Performance, Examined in Light of Goals and Policies". He had made an analysis of programs from the various RVOG area studios over the years the station had been in operation. He had also, through questionnaires and interviews, gathered first hand information on program production and how involved studio staff assessed the situation to be. His findings made him seriously question old assumptions about the effectiveness of radio in evangelism outreach. He expressed his general impression of the material he had gathered in the following way: "Examining replies to the questionnaire and reports, one senses some frustration in attempting to do an effective job in this area of broadcasting. Is it because they are attempting the impossible?" The conclusion he arrived at in his analysis, he formulated: "From arguments it appears conclusive that direct evangelism by radio is, if not impossible, extremely difficult." (Baglo, 1972:66-69).

Another critical communication researcher at that time was Dr. Cees Hamelink who served at the Communication Research Desk of the LWF Department of Studies. In his book "Perspectives for Public Communication", with the subtitle: " - A study of the churches' participation in public communication", he raised serious questions about the way public media were used by the Church.

Hamelink took his point of departure from the fact that most of the public media were controlled by economic, political and cultural power-structures. He saw this as a new form of oppression and enslavement and he found that the approach in Christian broadcasting was similar to that. He said:"Public media are, often unconsciously, treated as instruments for cultural-ideological invasion, as means of transporting cultural-ideological contents from sender to receiver with the aim of convincing the latter to adopt these contents. In this process the churches' participation in public communication is fundamentally characterized by the concept 'expansion'. Expansion means that we try to convince someone to accept our doctrine." He took his argument even further and said: "The interdependence between evangelism and propaganda culminates in the concept of 'winning people' ... a crucial element in the ideological oppression". (Hamelink, 1975:27-28, 45).

Hamelink's critique was not addressed directly to RVOG and it must also be remembered that his critical remarks about the Church are made in a wider political context. At the same time it is also clear that these remarks reflect a deep misconception of what the mission of the Church and evangelism outreach are all about.

In the second half of the 1970's, critical views on the Church's use of modern media in world mission were also voiced by Dr. Joachim Schmidt from Germany. In his dissertation "Rundfunkmission - ein massenmedium wird instrument", he expresses concern over the western denominational approach in media work which, in his view, expands and perpetuates the fragmentation of the Christian Church. (Schmidt, 1980:185-193). A former RVOG staff member and BBC reporter, Reginald Kennedy, has also in a recent, unpublished manuscript with the work-title "The Word Senders - a personal assessment of the work of the major Protestant Evangelical missionary radio stations", expressed deep doubts about "the missionary power" in radio. On the basis of his experience at RVOG and his study of other Christian radio stations,

he concludes his analysis by saying: "I have tried to show that despite true vision and mighty faith, the 'harvest of souls' is but a fantasy". He is of the opinion that the non-Christian audience which the Church was out to evangelize was never reached.

We have cited these critical assessments of Christian radio work to show how old assumptions about the effectiveness of radio in evangelism outreach were seriously questioned in the 1970's. Even if some of them were based on misconceptions and were too categorical, they had to be taken seriously also by RVOG. They were also taken seriously and a gradual shift in the role conception of RVOG was taking place.

3.5.3. Towards a Refined Understanding of the Role and Function of RVOG

Through regular engagement of active professional broadcasters and journalists, as well as through its international expertise on the policy and decision making levels, RVOG stayed in close touch with developments in the field of media communication all the time during the operation period. The Task Force study, however, marked a turning point in the understanding of RVOG's role and function. It was both the timing and the thoroughness of this study which made it so important.

Up to the end of the 1960's, we find that the media as an instrument played a predominant role in mass communication. There was a certain fixation with the media as such at the expense of communication proper. In the early 1970's we can observe a shift in the conception of the use of modern media in the ministry and mission of the Church.

Communication as a concept and term was now becoming the main issue and media were given a secondary place. This shift is reflected in the above-mentioned job description of the LWF Task Force. It was a task force on mass communication. The concept of "communication" also dominates the study report of 1972. We can certainly say that, as of this time, the role of media as such was drastically played down.

The Task Force Reportof 1972 redefined the role of RVOG within a framework of Christian communication. In the section on "Communication as the Church's Mandate" it was stated: "The public character of mass media enables or even requires the church to break out of its self-centeredness and reaffirm that

public communication is a central act of the Christian community ... The openness of the Christian proclamation challenges the church to consider the mass media as an opportunity to participate in the current discussions of society. The church has the task of contributing to the interpretation of world affairs to both herself and society ... The media of mass communication challenge the church to communicate herself in a transparent way ..."

With regard to objectives, the Task Force said: "Within the above frame of reference the churches may see the following as possible objectives for involvement in the media:

1. To accept the media in the role of catalyst to thrust the church into the world where it belongs, serving human needs ...
2. To examine constantly and critically the possible way by which the media could contribute to God's changing and saving action through the Gospel.
3. Within the limitations of the media, to proclaim the good news of God.
4. Wherever possible, to employ the media as informational and educational instruments, conveying truths which contribute to individual and social development."

(Task Force Report, pp.2-3).

It is important to note that in this document RVOG and media in general were placed in the broader framework of communication and that they were understood to serve as supportive agents in the total ministry and witness of the Church in society rather than change agents. This did not mean that their role was reduced and that RVOG was considered less important in the mission of the Church. On the contrary, its role was here conceived as being more central and substantive in the life and ministry of the Church. We also note that its public serve function was emphasized in this document.

The original concepts of the RVOG role and function were not changed but refined and moulded in line with developments in the understanding of media communication in general.

The last Program Director of RVOG, Knud Joergensen, has probably explained the role conception of the radio ministry best, as it had developed in the 1970's. In his dissertation "The Role and Function of the Media in the Mission of the Church", he has emphasized that "communication is a process ... it is

circular and the liniar view (action models) where a sender causes by means of message certain effects in the receiver is an illusion." (Joergensen,1981:22).

At the same time he maintains that "communication is the Church's mandate and its raison d'être and it is not just a matter of doing (evangelism, education and service), but of being ... a new community - a new humanity." (Ibid. p.202). He also says that "it is not so much a matter of using media as of contributing to a process which facilitates response and interaction in a participatory relationship between communicator and audience." (Joergensen op.cit. p.126).

Joergensen also finds, however, that media in the mission of the Church are indispensible and have their role to play.In two case studies he finds that even if there is no direct relation between evangelism by radio and church growth, it is obvious that RVOG played an important role in the mission of the Church. In Ethiopia he found that RVOG had contributed significantly to building up the image and credibility of the local church in the society. In West Africa it contributed remarkably to creation of a general openness and a new attitude towards Christians and Christianity among the Muslim Fulanis. (Ibid, pp.257-308). His considered conclusion is that by creating credibility and receptivity Christian media communication is functioning as "preparatio evangelica".

The development towards this role conception of the RVOG radio ministry was a process over all the years of operation. The Station Director, Ernst Baverochse, said in 1973: "The defining of the role in the mass media work of the Christian Church in Africa and Asia should be an ongoing process as the scene changes from year to year, almost from day to day." (LWF/BS.B.a. 1973:4).

In the development of the understanding of RVOG's role and function, it is important to note how the holistic concept of the Church's ministry was more and more refined. We have seen how spiritual and material needs in human life were seen together from the very beginning, but also how the radio ministry focused in on different needs at different times. As early on as 1966 the holistic understanding of RVOG's ministry was expressed in the following way: "The programs - whether 'evangelistic' or informational - aim to present the Christian attitude toward God, the world and the society

in which we live, and toward the individual in all aspects of his life." (Lutheran World, No.1. 1966, p.71).

We have also seen how a new consciousness of the world and the availability of development funds led RVOG to expand its involvement in the whole area of human and social development towards the end of the 1960's. Joergensen has pointed out that this holistic understanding of the church's ministry is both biblical and corresponds with the African understanding of life as an entity. (Joergensen, 1981:185).

This statement is clearly supported by the document on the "Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development" issued by the Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia and referred to earlier. In this document it is said: "We believe that an integral human development, where spiritual and material needs are seen together, is the only right approach to the development question in our society." RVOG could conceptually fully identify with this understanding. Development was understood as a "liberation process" and proclamation of the Gospel was part of this process. It was said: "It may well be that in a given situation, proclamation of the Gospel is found to be a powerful means for removing resistance to change and creating the hopefulness which is needed to bring about change ... This hope for a better future comes when men begin to see that life is meaningful - that there is a purpose and there is a goal." (Lundgren, RVOG Forum No.1, 1974).

The Task Force went further and said that it is not only a Gospel message that shall be communicated but that the Church should "communicate herself in a transparent way."

Study documents presented from time to time by RVOG staff members contributed significantly to a realistic understanding of the radio ministry and a refining of its role conception. As of 1973, Dr. John Bachman, who had served onthe LWF Task Force, was made Chairman of the Board (later Committee on Communication). In the following years he always opened the annual meetings with a lecture dealing with relevant issues in ongoing discussions about communication in general and Christian communication in particular. These presentations were also most valuable contributions to a realistic and sound understanding of the RVOG role and function

Knud Joergensen perhaps summerizes this understanding best when he says: "Christian media communication has to do with the presentation and the transparency of the Christian faith within the context of mission. And even though this transparency may take many forms and often finds itself immersed in "secular" matters, it is still involved in sharing the faith in the incarnate One, the God among us. And thus it is participating in God's mission. The moment Christian media communication separates itself from this mission, it is not longer Christian. Thus it is not a kerygmatic aspect which makes the media servants in God's mission. Rather any attempt to make the faith transparent - through cultural relevancy, contextual programming, through concern for the whole person, and through witness to God in the midst - is to be a dynamically equivalent media message within the context of mission." (Joergensen, op.cit. pp.197-198).

With this brief review, we have tried to point out that, at the same time as the objectives of RVOG remained the same all the time, the understanding of RVOG's role and function was constantly reviewed and refined. The concern was all the time that the broadcasting facility should be used in the most effective way and serve its original purpose - PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO HIS WORLD.

PART FOUR

THE CHANGING SCENE

THE CHANGING SCENE

The general optimism which marked the time when the radio project was conceived and planned was shortlived. (cf.supra, p.15-16). Already at the end of the 1950's developments showed that the future might not be as bright as expected. Even the future of the radio project was put into question when, in 1960, there was an attempt to overthrow Emperor Haile Selassie and his government. This incident was a foretaste of what was to come.

The whole period in which RVOG was in operation was marked by dramatic and rapid changes in the whole geographical area RVOG was there to serve. Revolutionary forces plunged one country after the other into political turmoil. There were at the same time remarkable developments in the local churches and in church-mission relationships. The same can also be said about developments in the field of media technology and communication. - RVOG performed its role on a changing scene.

In the following we shall first see how the host country went through a dramatic political metamorphosis, and how RVOG was challenged by the new socio-political situation. The role of RVOG as "voice of the Gospel" was put to a test in the Ethiopian revolution. The question of communicating a relevant gospel message in the ongoing socio-political struggle became a burning issue. We shall also see how the political developments and the military take-over of the radio station led to a timely re-planning of the communication ministries of the LWF. The RVOG station had "served its term", but the RVOG ministry had not, and the question which had to be answered was what forms the continued ministry should have. We shall follow the initial phase of the search for an answer to that question.

Finally, we shall in this section make a brief retrospective outline of the wider context in which RVOG performed its role and see how, also here, the scene was changing.

4.1. Revolution in the Host Country

It was in the early weeks of 1974 that the general public in Ethiopia began to realize that something unusual was taking place in their country. Just what it was, who was behind it and what it meant was only subject to speculations.

The Ethiopian revolution began as an anonymous movement - as an undercurrent - which to begin with only shook the political establishment and the society in its foundations. When this undercurrent surfaced, it turned out to be a mighty "flood" which swept away the old monarchy, turned over the traditional society and left behind it a nation in bewilderment, uncertainty and a great deal of expectation.

With these dramatic developments during the first nine months of 1974, a page had been turned and a new chapter had begun in the history of ancient Ethiopia - a history which stretches back over more than 3.000 years.

Radio Voice of the Gospel had, for many good reasons, been located in this country. It had enjoyed more than a decade of hospitable accommodation and generally good working relationships with the country's old regime. At the same time, the radio station had established enough distance to the old government to be allowed by the new authorities in power to continue the broadcasting operation. Without any interruption, RVOG was therefore able to carry on its normal operation during the tense transition period and to continue its broadcasting ministry 2½ years after the new regime had taken power.

We shall here first give a brief background to the revolution, and then deal with the question of what it meant to operate a Christian radio station in the midst of escalating unrest and introduction of a new political ideology. We shall also see how relationships between the new regime and the radio station developed, as well as how RVOG, after a period of remarkable freedom, gradually became more and more restricted and was finally silenced through a sudden military operation on March 12, 1977.

It should perhaps also be noted that, at the same time as the Ethiopian revolution began, RVOG was in the midst of a leadership shift. The LWF/BS General Director, Sigurd Aske, who had laid its foundation and been in charge of all operations from the beginning, left his position and was replaced by his Assistant, Marc Chambron, in mid-May 1974. Ernst Bauerochse, whohad served as Station Director the last four years and before that held a position of Assistant RVOG Director since 1967, was replaced by his Associate, Manfred Lundgren, in mid-June the same year. RVOG also had its highest turn-over of other staff in its whole history in 1974. These personnel changes had, however, no connection with the political developments.

4.1.1. A Background to the Revolution

Developments in Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I offer a two-fold picture. This period which covers half a century is, on the one hand, marked by remarkable progress and achievements in several respects. The list of these achievements, as recorded in contemporary history, is long and impressive. It was during this period that slavery was officially abolished in the country and thousands of people in serfhood were given their freedom and human dignity. - Fundamental administrative reforms were also carried through and the Parliament was established. - Educational institutions and social services were expanded and improved. - Steps were also taken to modernize communication and production in the country, and a number of foreign experts were engaged to speed up developments. - Ethiopia had also during this period taken its place in the international community and played an increasingly important role. It emerged as one of the leading nations in Africa. Ethiopia was instrumental in the formation of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1963 which took place in its capital, where OAU also established its headquarters in the following year. The UN Economic Commission for Africa was also permanently accommodated in the magnificent Africa Hall in Addis Ababa which was also frequently used for international conferences in the 1960's and the following decade.

At the same time as all these developments and achievements gave Ethiopia an international reputation and image of a progressive nation, the political and social system of the country kept the majority of its population in deep poverty, ignorance and destitution. Official figures from 1974 show that Ethiopia was at that time close to the bottom of the list, as far as the gross national product factor per capita was concerned, compared to other countries in the world. The literacy rate for the entire nation was at 4,7% and only 18% of all school-age children had an opportunity to go to school. To this came also the uneven distribution of educational facilities. Addis Ababa alone counted for 60% of all school enrolment in the whole country. The medical facilities were also concentrated in the main urban centres. Only 32 out of the existing 80 hospitals were located in the rural areas.

The most distressful of all was, however, land ownership. 90% of the population got their living from farming but, according to reports, two

out of three farmers were tenants at the mercy of feudal landlords who owned more than 90% of all arable land in the country. The tenants had an obligation to work for their landlords and in addition they had to pay a large share of their own produce in rent for the land they were farming. Traditionally all land belonged in principle to the Emperor who had the right to distribute it at will. Members of the royal family, the aristocracy, the Orthodox Church and the ruling ethnic group (Amhara) had, with the consent of the Emperor, taken hold of the best farm-land and only a small share, estimated at about 8%, was in private ownership.

For all these reasons resentment had been building up among the many nationalities (estimated at about 80) which made up the majority of the nation against the Government and the Emperor. They saw themselves as discriminated against, oppressed and exploited. Several attempts to rebel against the Government had been made during the reign of Haile Selassie, but they had all failed. The last attempt was made in 1960. +)

It is this situation which constitutes the background to the revolution which began in early 1974. Even if the Emperor was seen as ultimately responsible for this state of affairs, it was the prevailing political and social system which caused the rebellion. The nation was seen as a victim of its own structures and the control of these structures was out of hand.

The basic factors which made the Armed Forces take action have been summarized in the following way:

"- the spiraling cost of living;
- the abominable system of land tenure;
- the sudden spread of hunger and famine particularly in the Wollo Province;
- the sudden loss of political control by the authorities, leaving the country with no effective government;
- the spontaneous uprising of the mass of workers, peasants and city intellectuals against the feudal-bourgeoise regime; and
- the realization by members of the Armed Forces that they were part of the people rather than a tool for oppression."

(Valdés Vivó 1978:60).

4.1.2. The Armed Forces Assume Power

The following summary account of the political developments in Ethiopia from early 1974 to March 1977 will be seen from the perspective of RVOG and

+) The above figures and facts are based on documents prepared by Menkir Esayas and Tarekegn Adebo and presented at the General Assembly of the EECMY 1975.

limited to their bearing on the operation of the radio station. The developments during this period had two distinct phases.

The "Creeping Revolution"

Along with rumours about unrest within the Armed Forces in several garrisons, an increasing nervousness and tension was noticed in government circles during the first weeks of 1974. The RVOG leadership was warned several times to be more careful in reporting and programming or else the Government would have to take serious measures against the station.

The "action group"within the Armed Forces which was at the "control panel" of the revolution and which later was known as "The Dergue" remained hidden and its base was not known for some time. At the end of February the pressure on the Government was so strong that the Prime Minister, Aklilou Habte Wold, was forced to resign together with his Cabinet.

In the following few months the Emperor was given an opportunity to set up a new government, revise the constitution and clean up corruption and maladministration. Lij Endalkatchew Makonnen was made new Prime Minister. The Emperor addressed the Nation on March 4th and pleaded for calm and public support for the reforms which were under way. A "white paper" outlining policies and plans of the new Government was issued, but it was received without enthusiasm by the public.

During this period local mass media,including RVOG, were given an unprecedented freedom. Almost overnight a "wild" freedom of press and speech developed without any official authorization. This was deliberate tactics of the "architects" of the revolution, aiming at paving the way for their next move which should be more dramatic.

Towards the end of April the previous Cabinet members and a few other officials were detained. At that point RVOG was also contacted by two officers representing the military "action group". The RVOG Advisor on Government and Church Affairs, Dr. Emmanuel Gabre Sillasie, who met with them in a closed session, was told that they were the new authority in the country and they wanted RVOG to know that. They assured him that they had full confidence in the radio station and wanted us to cooperate with them. No demands were made

and no instructions were given. They came only to inform the station of what was in the making. No names were given of the leaders. They only left a telephone number where they could be contacted.

RVOG was now in a dilemma. There was a de jure government without much authority and a de facto authority with power, but without legal status and without officials with whom we could communicate or establish relationships. It was clear to us that as long as the old Government was there, we were bound to deal with those officials.The problem was that they were more and more reluctant to assume any responsibility and to take any action. The country was in a political vacuum.

In the evening of June 28, shortly after 9 p.m. the station was suddenly invaded by armed troops. I was called to the office and was politely told by the officer in charge that they were sent by the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee and that they had a message they wanted us to broadcast in Amharic to the Ethiopian people. I suggested that before doing that, we ought to contact the Ministry of Information. He smiled and said that the Ministry was in the same situation as RVOG. I took the telephone and called the Liaison Officer at the Ministry who only confirmed what the officer had just told me.

We had no choice. The Master Control-room was already occupied by soldiers and the Amharic transmission was interrupted with an announcement, read by an officer. The announcement was short. The Ethiopian people were only told that the Armed Forces were now taking action to clean up the administration of the country and they asked for public support. After the announcement was read the soldiers returned to their barracks.

From that date a curfew was imposed on the city from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. and a new wave of detentions began. A number of high officials and nobles were put in jail. This continued for about a month. The Endalkatchew government was now doomed. He was forced to resign and a few days later he was detained.

A new attempt to set up a government was made when the Emperor on July 22nd appointed Lij Michael Imru as new Prime Minister. A few days later a new Cabinet was also appointed. At that time the Ministry of Information had collapsed. There was no Minister and the Vice Minister was arrested. The

RVOG Liaison Officer, Yilma Gabre Wold, informed the station that he did not want to be consulted any more.

On the 5th of August, Dr. Emmanuel Gabre Sillassie and myself were called to the 4th Army Division where the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces (CCAF) had its base. We were informed about the situation. In the course of our conversation we requested clarification about the status of RVOG, the validity of our contract with the Government and our future working relationships with the authorities. We were told that these questions should be studied.

Two weeks later we were called again to the 4th Army Division and were now told that RVOG was in a good standing with the CCAF and that until the ministry was functioning again we should have direct relations with them. Procedures for communication between RVOG and the CCAF were also agreed upon. On August 31st the official English newspaper, Ethiopian Herald, had an editorial on the topic "The Road of No Return" which made it clear that the days were counted for the old regime. A systematic breaking down of the Emperor's image began now in local media.

At the same time as the Emperor and other high officials were stripped of all power and dignity, security arrangements were tightened in the city and at RVOG.

In early September RVOG together with other public media and representatives of foreign news agencies were called to a press conference at the 4th Army Division. We were told that Ethiopia was in a critical transition period and that reporting on events was a sensitive matter. Speculations and sensational reporting could aggravate the situation and we were requested to remain alert but restrict reporting to confirmed facts. No information on immediate plans was given.

The drama ended on the morning of September 12 when the Emperor was quietly taken out of the Jubilee Palace in a white Volkswagen and driven to "a safe place". The situation was tense in the city that day, but there were no disturbances and not a single shot was fired.

That evening RVOG carried a topic called "End of an Empire - Birth of a Nation". The Ethiopian revolution was now approaching its second phase.

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) Takes Power

The day after the Emperor had been dethroned and detained, the CCAF which, in the meantime, had been renamed "Provisional Military Administrative Council", officially assumed power.

In a proclamation made on September 13th the following was announced:

"Until the people elect their genuine representatives in true democratic elections, Parliament has been closed down ... and the revised constitution of 1955 is suspended ... The Armed Forces Committee has assumed full government power until a legally constituted people's assembly approves a new constitution and a government is duly established."

It was also said in the announcement that the country's monarchy should be retained and that the Crown Prince, Merid Azmatch Asfa Wossen, should be coronated King of Ethiopia as soon as he returned from abroad. He should become "head of state with no power in the country's administrative and political affairs". (PMAC Proclamation no.1).

On behalf of the Ethiopian people the Ethiopian Herald expressed in an editorial the same day a response to actions taken by the PMAC and said:

"Ethiopia is re-born. Our soldiers have come to our rescue. Devoid of any personal, group or tribal interest, these men in uniform have come to assist civilians in establishing a government of the people's choice. The dynamic changes have already been outlined in a nutshell. BRAVO SOLDIERS!" (Ethiopian Herald, September 13th, 1974).

The Minister of National Defence, General Aman Michael Andom, was elected Chairman of the PMAC and was also named Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The former Prime Minister, Lij Michael Imru, was made Minister of Information which meant that RVOG could resume normal relationships with the Ministry again. Already in early October Lij Michael visited RVOG and it was agreed at that time that formal talks should be arranged with the PMAC aiming at clarifying the station's legal status as well as policies and procedures which should be observed in the new situation. A formal request to this effect was submitted in writing by RVOG on the 8th of October.

Before these plans materialized, the situation suddenly changed. A sharp controversy within the PMAC - allegedly over the question of how the Eritrea

problem should be resolved - resulted in the dismissal of General Aman from his post as the PMAC Chairman. He was put under house arrest and in the late evening of November the 23rd, he was killed in a gun-battle in his home. The same evening a summary execution of 59 former government officials took place.

This event, which has been called "the bloody Saturday night", marked a sharp turn in the course of the revolution. The sudden change from the use of peaceful means to the use of arms came as a shock for the Nation and the outside world.

Over that night the official attitude towards RVOG also changed. The Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) began to transmit only selected news items over the RVOG wire services and the station was told not to carry any news item which contained international reactions to the summary executions.

The RVOG staff reacted very strongly against this violation of agreements and in consultation with the LWF Headquarters in Geneva, it was agreed that immediate negotiations should be taken up with the Government. Dr. Carl J. Hellberg, Director of the LWF Department on Church Cooperation, came to Addis Ababa to assist in these negotiations and help straighten out working relationships.

The result of this was that the Ministry of Information, in a letter dated the 4th of December 1974, made it clear that RVOG should continue its operation on the basis of previous agreements and it was admitted that the ENA had made a mistake when the wire services were censored.

On the basis of this settlement of the acute crisis, the LWF Cabinet in Geneva drew up certain principles and guidelines for the continued operation of RVOG which we shall come back to. In the meantime General Teferi Benti had been appointed new Chairman of the PMAC and had replaced General Aman Michael Andom.

At the end of the year, the long-awaited official declaration of the PMAC's political ideology and objectives had been published. This document which reflected a genuine concern for the Ethiopian people and its cultural heritage, as well as for human rights and social justice, was received with

great relief. The "philosophy of Ethiopian socialism", as outlined in this document, strengthened people's confidence in the ongoing revolution.

To follow up on the official talks with the Government regarding the future operation of RVOG which had been planned in the fall of 1974, an LWF delegation, consisting of Dr. Carl J. Hellberg, Dr. Robert Geisendorfer and Rev. Marc Chambron, together with the RVOG leadership, met with Government officials on February 21-23, 1975. These consultations were very friendly and constructive. Even if no official document was signed, there was a mutual understanding that RVOG could carry on its normal operation on the basis of previous agreements.

In the meantime the "Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia" had been promulgated. In this document a legal basis for nationalization of RVOG had been laid. Radio and TV were listed under "activities exclusively reserved for the State", and it was said that this applied to the public as well as the private sector. At our request for an interpretation of this legislation with regard to RVOG, we were told that the Government did not have any plans to take over the station.

Apart from nationalization of all banks, financial intermediaries, insurance companies and a number of private commercial firms and industries, several fundamental reforms which radically changed the traditional Ethiopian society were carried through in 1975. Legislation on land ownership brought an end to the feudal system and a new labour law gave the exploited working class a new status.

All these reforms were viewed positively by most people, including the leadership of the Mekane Yesus Church and RVOG. In the annual report for 1975 the following reflection indicates this assessment: "If we see these and other reforms during the year from the point of view of the previously under-privileged majority of the population, we realize how fundamental they are in the effort to establish a more just society and to build a better future for the people of this country." (LWF/COC.a.1976:Exh.8 B/1, p.5).

RVOG had no major problems in 1975 and the first weeks of 1976. We continued to have friendly relationships both with the Ministry of Information

and with the PMAC Officer on Information and Public Relations, Colonel Asrat Desta, who was one of the two officers who first took contact with RVOG and who always did his best to help us out when we had any problem.

As of mid-February 1976, the situation suddenly changed again. Demands for civilian rule and various resistance movements began to crop up. A new wave of detentions swept the country and there were several serious clashes between the various fractions. The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Theophilos, was also detained at this time.

On April the 20th, the PMAC Vice Chairman, Mengestu Haile Mariam, published what he called "The National Democratic Revolution Program" which was in line with the previous declaration of the objectives and philosophy of the revolution, but it was more militant and aggressive.

At this time the Minister of Information, Lij Michael Imru, had left his post and was replaced by a Permanent Secretary by the name of Tesfaye Taddese. He demanded a complete scrutiny of the RVOG programming and indicated that the clearing procedures had to be tightened. RVOG had to adjust to the "socialist orientation of the new Ethiopia", he said.

Increasing violence in and around the city and speculations that the station should be taken over by the Government made it necessary at this time to prepare for an emergency situation. At a consultation in Geneva on April 1-2, 1976, all these policy questions and practical problems were discussed and necessary guidelines given, as we shall see further on.

In the second half of 1976 it became increasingly clear that the station would not be able to continue operation much longer. Several staff members had been arrested and we were frequently called to the Palace for long interrogations.

On the 3rd of February 1977, the PMAC Vice Chairman, Mengestu Haile Mariam, killed seven of the top officials of the "Dergue" and took power, claiming that he had foiled an attempted counter-revolutionary coup.

After that, RVOG had no official contacts with Government authorities until the station was taken over five weeks later. Before we try to depict the

actual military take-over of RVOG and take up some of the aspects related to it, we shall briefly discuss the role of RVOG during the last three years of its operation.

4.1.3. Operation of RVOG in a Revolutionary Setting

As it became clear that Ethiopia was heading towards a new political future which should be radically different from the past, it was also clear that the future of RVOG was at stake. Should the radio station be allowed to continue its operation? If so, for how long and under which conditions? Would it be possible to continue a meaningful Christian radio ministry in a political revolution of this kind?

These were some of the questions which pre-occupied not only the RVOG leadership and its staff in early 1974, but also the organizations behind the project and their constituencies. As the traditional Ethiopian society was breaking down and a different society was emerging, three major issues and concerns dominated the RVOG operation. The first had to do with the station's integrity and credibility. The second was the intriguing question about its specific role at this time, and the third had to do with the safety of personnel and property.

RVOG's Integrity and Credibility

We have already mentioned that during a period prior to the deposition of the Emperor, all public media were given a freedom which was never experienced in Ethiopia at any previous time. RVOG enjoyed this freedom too and used it to report on events and developments in the country in its domestic as well as its international services. From April to the end of August 1974, RVOG carried more than 250 Ethiopian stories in its news services. The station also used this opportunity to speak to social issues from a Christian point of view. We had extensive reports on the famine in the Wollo Province which the old regime did everything to conceal. We had panel discussions on political developments in the country. Some felt that we were heading towards a time whe old procedures of internal checking could be retired. The administration took, however, the line that the situation might change again.

The Armed Forces were using this period to soften and remove resistance and to pave the way for what was to come. They produced a number of statements and announcements which they fed into public media. RVOG was also requested to broadcast some of these statements. We made it clear to the CCAF that we were prepared to make our broadcasting facilities available as a public service, but only on two conditions:

1) The material would have to be channelled through the Ministry of Information or the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA). RVOG would not be prepared to receive statements for broadcasting directly from the CCAF.

2) The statements should not contain attacks on or defamation of any individual or institution. RVOG reserved the right to cut out such elements or refuse to broadcast statements which contained such segments.

To begin with the statements were modest in length and content, but the volume gradually increased and the content was not always acceptable. On several occasions cuts had to be made which created irritation in the military camp.

After the Emperor was deposed and the PMAC had assumed power, the control of public media was not only back to "normal", but was suddenly tightened. We have in the previous section mentioned about the acute crisis which followed the summary executions on the 23rd of November. Even if that crisis was settled after negotiations with the Ministry of Information in early December, the situation at the station was unpleasant. The news editors even went on strike one day because they felt it was not meaningful to broadcast the news.

Due to this situation we seriously considered temporarily stopping all newscasts. After consultation with the leadership of the local Mekane Yesus Church, it was, however, agreed that we should continue in spite of all the problems. (LWF/COC.a.1975:Exh. F.4/1, p.10).

In the light of the developments and the fact that the integrity of RVOG was at stake, the LWF Cabinet discussed what policy the station should follow. The ruling of the Cabinet was that at the advice of the political authorities in power, "RVOG should reluctantly face the fact that it was forced to be silent and not be able to issue all the news". The limit should be if the station was requested to broadcast information

which was known to be false, the Cabinet said. At that point "the station would have to curtail its operation in an appropriate fashion". (LWF Cabinet December 11, 1974: Aide Memoire).

The struggle to maintain RVOG's integrity was at times very frustrating. We knew that to give in for pressure from the authorities meant to endanger RVOG's credibility, and to be too stubborn and ignore the authority's advice could mean the end of the whole operation. Considering the political reality in which RVOG operated at that time, we cannot but say that the station was remarkably well treated during the period of transition between the two regimes. We shall in the following pages see how the struggle to carry out a meaningful Christian ministry during the last 12 months of operation caused similar difficulties.

The Role and Function of RVOG in the New Situation

Interrelated with the question of integrity and credibility was the question of playing a meaningful role and serving a purpose in the ongoing political unrest in the country. This concern was reflected in the Director's annual report for 1975 where it was said: "Considering the declared objectives of the revolution, RVOG has a Christian obligation to support all efforts to build a better society and at the same time add a Christian dimension to the struggle for social justice and human rights ... Never before has it been more important to live up to the motto of the station". (LWF/COC.a. 1976:Exh. 8.B/1, p.5).

In early 1976 RVOG was for the first time told that the station was now expected to gear its programming towards conformity with the political ideology which PMAC had adopted and declared in its "National Democratic Revolution Program". It was at the same time indicated that RVOG's religious programming in its traditional form was questioned and we were asked to review the station's program policy.

Although this was not automatically to be taken as interference, it was a clear indication that we should not take it for granted than an international Christian radio station would be allowed to broadcast at will in a declared socialist society. We have already mentioned that the new Head of the Ministry of Information demanded a scrutiny of the RVOG programming with

a view to adjusting it to the "socialist orientation of the new Ethiopia". The question we were now faced with was: How far can we go without compromising the Gospel and how far ought we to go for the sake of the Gospel?

In consultation with the LWF leaders in Geneva, it was agreed that the new attitude of the authorities should be taken as a challenge to present the Christian message in a more relevant way, taking into consideration the political realities, and thus making a more meaningful contribution.

In line with the guidelines given, the RVOG leadership took the request from the Ministry of Information as a reason to open a dialogue with the political authorities on the role of public media in general and RVOG in particular in the Ethiopian situation. This dialogue continued until the end of November that year and resulted in a relaxed relationship. We were repeatedly told that the Government had no intention to prevent RVOG from pursuing its objectives as a Christian radio station. What the Government wanted was that we should realize the political reality of the day and the direction in which the society was moving.

Upon the suggestion of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ato Tesfaye Taddese, a concluding session or "a discussion forum" was arranged at RVOG on November 22nd. To this meeting, program and news staff of the Ministry of Information and of RVOG, as well as administrative personnel, was invited. We used this occasion to underline the human right to inform and be informed without restrictions. We voiced our concern that public media by being controlled too much or by just "playing safe" would render a dis-service both to the authorities and the people.

From the Government side it was made clear that all mass media in the country had to be seen as an integral part of the new socio-political system. We were also informed by the Permanent Secretary that guidelines for all public media were under preparation by the Government and should be published in the near future.

The dialogue between the authorities and the leadership of the station on program content and on the role of RVOG as a Christian radio station had clarified our respective positions and intentions. In the meantime RVOG was not obliged to change its program policy and no new restrictions had been imposed on the station. At the same time it was clear that there was

no future place in the emerging new society for a Christian radio station. It was only a question of time before this broadcasting institution would have to be closed down.

Planning for Emergency

Concern for the safety of personnel and property also goes back to the early part of 1974. Reports about the political disturbances in Ethiopia naturally caused LWF, as the owner and operator of RVOG, great concern. The LWF/BS Director, Marc Chambron, had, in April 1974, already raised the question about planning for an emergency situation.

In a confidential memorandum to the LWF General Secretary and the Director of the Department for Church Cooperation, he referred to the drastically changing situation in the country and said that, although there was no need to panic or cause panic, LWF could not be "totally unprepared for some possible moves which could have grave human, operational and financial consequences.". He raised two basic issues:

a) A possible emergency situation in which foreign personnel would be expelled or have to leave the country.

b) A situation in which the legal status and production/transmission possibilities would be drastically changed.

He elaborated on possible steps that ought to be considered in order to protect both personnel and property.

The questions which Marc Chambron had raised were further discussed with the outgoing RVOG Director, Ernst Bauerochse, when he returned to Europe a few months later. Plans for a communication code system incase of emergency were also worked out at that time.

Developments in Ethiopia did not, however, call for any immediate safety arrangements at the station. The emergency plans were therefore only kept on file for some time.

It was in early 1976 that the situation suddenly changed, as we have mentioned earlier. Increasing unrest and violence in and around the city with frequent gun-battles at night together with rumours and speculations about a take-over of the radio station, made it necessary to review the emergency plans and make necessary arrangements. The matter was discussed

in the RVOG Cabinet and after consultation with Marc Chambron in Geneva, it was decided to prepare and circulate necessary information to concerned people at the station.

A mimeographed paper containing advice to individuals in case of emergency was distributed to all staff in late April. Detailed plans for what action should be taken by the leadership in various situations were drawn up and instructions were given to concerned staff.

In June 1976 Marc Chambron asked the legal firm, Lalive & Budin in Geneva, to study the legal implications for LWF in case the station were taken over by the Government or damaged, and what possible action should be taken.

At a meeting of the LWF/COC Officers in August that year a "Contingency Plan" was discussed and approved for implementation. This document outlined the course of action which should be followed when the time came. Dealing with the question of termination of RVOG's operation, it was said:

"1. The RVOG Director in consultation with the Cabinet shall have the authority to take a tentative administrative decision to reduce or to discontinue all RVOG operations with immediate effect on one of the following indications:
   - nationalization of RVOG property;
   - official withdrawal of broadcasting licence or similar government order;
   - official written order imposing censorship;
   - other circumstances which, according to the judgement of the RVOG Director in consultation with the Cabinet, constitute justification for discontinuation of RVOG operations, such as:
     . unacceptable restrictions and/or control of program content;
     . unacceptable labour demans;
     . severe disturbances.

2. The LWF and WACC headquarters and area studios shall immediately be informed about the situation and the tentative decision which has been made.

3. After full clarification has been reached with Government authorities and depending on the circumstances, LWF/WACC officials shall either go to Addis Ababa or RVOG officials shall go to Geneva for consultations. Following such consultations appropriate LWF authorities shall take necessary action regarding the future of RVOG. Throughout the whole process close contact should also be maintained with the All Africa Conference of Churches and the Ethiopian churches, particularly the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (ECMY).

4. If the final decision is to terminate the RVOG operations the following contingency plan shall be considered for partial or full impelementation."

Here followed a detailed outline of what steps should be taken.

With regard to the objectives of this plan it was said:

"This contingency plan shall have the following objectives:

a) to take care of human as well as legal aspects of the termination of employment contracts for local as well as expatriate staff;

b) to negotiate compensation for RVOG property at an appropriate time and with appropriate authorities;

c) to make necessary arrangements after approval of Government authorities to remove and save RVOG archived documents and financial records as well as library items as far as possible;

d) to assist area studios and their supporting churches by providing professional consultative services with an aim to finding other radio outlets and to employ other media in their Christian communication ministry."

(LWF/COC Officers confidential Minutes August 1976)

All these carefully prepared plans contributed to strengthening the moral at the station and provided for an orderly termination of the RVOG operation in spite of the dramatic military action which ended the RVOG story in the early morning of March 12, 1977.

4.1.4. The Military Take-over of RVOG

The radio station continued its regular operations following the bloody coup at the Old Palace on the 3rd of February, 1977 when seven of the PMAC top leaders were killed, but it was an operation in suspense. No regular working relations were possible with government officials after that. Our contact person at the PMAC headquarters, Colonel Asrat Desta, had been killed and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information had been arrested. The Liaison Officer visited the station occasionally, but he did not do and say much. We were all waiting for the next move by the PMAC.

On Friday afternoon, the 11th of March, we were informed that all RVOG bank accounts had been blocked. We were also told that the Armed Forces had instructed the RVOG guards at the transmitter station not to open fire when an army unit the next morning was going to make a check of the place.

It was therefore no surprise when I got a telephone call at 5.15 the next morning and was told to come to the office immediately. Coming out of the

house I found the campus full of soldiers. At the station the morning shift of newsmen and technicians were already under custody in the Assembly Hall. I was quietly taken to my office and at gun-point told to call all department heads and all foreign staff to the station and to given orders to the transmitter crew to close down all transmissions before 6 o'clock.

Two hours later we were all gathered in the Assembly Hall and the loud-speakers were switched on. The official proclamation about the take-over of RVOG was read to us over the government radio.

After having announced that RVOG had been nationalized and the agreement signed between the former regime and the LWF on February 15, 1961 had been abrogated, the statement elaborated on the objectives of the revolution and the function of public media in the ongoing struggle. "The means of mass communication have a special revolutionary role to play", it was said. Reference was then made to "imperialist and reactionary forces which employ media as an instrument for dulling the masses so that they may perpetuate their exploitative and oppressive systems. The cover for this is at one time freedom and at another religion", the statement said.

Having elaborated at length on that, Radio Voice of the Gospel was pointed out as an institution "established by the former regime to expand its religious favouratism and to this day continues to echo the bourgeoise ideology", the statement said and continued: "It is clear to everyone that to allow the radio station to continue with its previous services would tentamount to sanctioning the favouratism policy of the former regime. ... A radio station that does not reflect the ideology of the working class and does not in general meet the needs of the broad masses contributes towards diluting the revolution and thus creates a dangerous situation for subversion." The statement concluded: "It has been found essential to utilize Radio Voice of the Gospel for the intensification and advancement of the revolution of the broad masses."

No comments were made to the proclamation. We were only told to wait for an official delegation from the PMAC which should come later in the course of the morning. The delegation came around 10 o'clock and we were told that the station should be back on the air the same evening but under the call letters RVRE (=Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia).

For this reason they requested assistance of all personnel, including expatriates.

We made use of this request to negotiate full freedom for all staff to dispose of residences and cars and to freely move about in and outside the campus. We agreed to render technical assistance for four days on the condition that no voices of RVOG expatriate staff should be used in any broadcast. This was done to avoid any misunderstanding among the listeners about the new situation.

After very tense morning hours with machine-guns pointing at the administration building from all corners of the campus and soldiers watching us all the time, the situation in the afternoon was more relaxed. We were then free to move around and even leave the compound if we so wished.

Our request to use the telex for a message to our headquarters in Geneva was, however, refused. The reason given was that international mass media had been informed and there was no need for more information. This lack of communication left the LWF head office, cooperating churches and area studios, as well as relatives to RVOG expatriate staff, in uncertainty about what was taking place in the Ethiopian capital.

Marc Chambron and his colleagues in Geneva were also unsuccessful in contacting the RVOG leadership for a first-hand report. The fact that this happened on a weekend, when offices were closed and most people were away from home, made it even more difficult to handle the situation. In spite of this, no efforts were spared to clarify the situation. National Committees and LWF officers all over the world were informed. An extraordinary LWF Cabinet meeting on Saturday afternoon issued a first press release. The following day plans were made for LWF representatives to go to Addis Ababa as soon as possible to clarify what actually was taking place and to assist the RVOG leadership. Only on Monday was it possible to send a first telex message from Addis Ababa and report in more detail about what had happened and what the situation was.

During the following days the Ministry of Information and National Guidance appointed a Management Committee to be in charge of the station and one of its executives, Ato Gedamu Abraham, was named Manager. For a proper administrative transition we were allowed to set up an interim office, but we were told not to remove any documents or any movable property from the administration building. The Ministry also appointed a working group which should take a detailed inventory of all property as well as all financial and personnel documents at the station.

On Tuesday the 15th of April, the LWF General Secretary, Dr. Carl Mau, and Rev'd Holger Benettsson arrived at the station and in the following days, in consultation with local church leaders and government officials, plans for how to proceed were drawn up.

Fourteen years of uninterupted operation of this radio station had come to an end, and what now waited ahead was the closing of RVOG files and planning for a continued ministry, located elsewhere and in a different form. Before coming to that, the following official statement by the LWF General Secretary will conclude the RVOG story proper:

" The LWF deeply regrets that the Ethiopian Provisional Military Administrative Council has seen fit to nationalize RVOG. It was done abruptly, without prior consultation. It is especially regrettable than an extensive international service for a large target area in Africa, Asia and the Middle East was forced to stop without any prior notice or explanation.

In silencing RVOG,a voice used by many Christian denominations, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and a voice praised by leaders of other religions, has been closed down.

It has been a voice for justice, peace and human rights. Understanding the Gospel as serving the whole human being, this voice has been involved in the issues and concerns of daily life. It has sought to address the needs of health, food, sanitation, literacy, education, information, development and nation-building. It has sought to support a number of governmental and inter-governmental agencies such as the Organization for African Unity and the United Nations. Much of RVOG's programming has intended to address these needs. ---
Silencing RVOG in no way silences the churches' ministry of proclamation. LWF is committed to assist them in this work. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to serve through this powerful instrument of RVOG for 14 years. The expertise gained, and much of the global facilities being used, will continue in this service."

4.2. Enforced Replanning

At the same time as nationalization of the RVOG broadcasting facilities was a great loss for the churches and audiences which had been served by them, it also enforced a necessary replanning of this ministry. Not only was the technical equipment old and replacement of major installations long overdue, but the whole structure of the project needed a general review too.

The RVOG leadership had been aware of this need for a long time. The LWF Task Force on Communication struggled with this problem in 1970/72 and the RVOG consultation on long-range planning in 1975 was also deeply concerned with questions related to structure and strategy. (cf.supra p.162 ff).

The nationalization of the broadcasting station suddenly enforced a more radical replanning of the LWF involvement in Christian media communication than had been possible earlier.

In this section we shall first take up some of the questions related to the winding up of the old project and then see how the initial stage of the replanning of the LWF communication ministries developed.

4.2.1. Winding up of the RVOG Institutional Operations

The immediate implications of the military take-over had to do with practical arrangements for resumption of station operations under the new managements and normalization of conditions for those of us who lived on the station compound which was now turned into a military camp. Although new issues came up from time to time in the following weeks, most of these arrangements were agreed upon with the official government delegation on the first day.

It was considered the responsibility of the "Interim Office" for RVOG affairs to keep campus residents informed about security and other regulations which had to be observed after the take-over. It was therefore agreed that information sheets should be issued and circulated among all concerned. In the following two weeks such mimeographed information sheets were issued almost daily and this contributed greatly to easing tension and provided for a smooth team-work during the complicated transition period.

Apart from these practical arrangements the "Interim Office" had three major questions to resolve:
The first had to do with contractual obligations to local employees. In the official proclamation on the nationalization of RVOG it was stated that "Ethiopian employees of the organization concerned will continue their service as government employees". On the basis of this it was agreed that the only financial obligation which RVOG had to local staff was to pay their salary upto March 12 and to compensate them for unused vacation and overtime work upto that date. RVOG was relieved of the severance pay which Ethiopian law prescribed as an obligation of the employer. RVOG was exempted from this because their continued employment was guaranteed by the Government.

Their accumulated pension fund was taken over against a Government assurance that old age pension obligations were automatically assumed by the state.

It should be noted here, with satisfaction, that the Government has lived up to these promises both with regard to employment (with the same salaries and benefits) and pensions during the six years which have elapsed since the nationalization.

The second major question had to do with repatriation of expatriate staff. It was agreed with the authorities that repatriation of the 23 expatriate staff members and their families, of whom 8 were from African and Asian countries could be done without pressure of time. The new management of the station even offered temporary employment to some of the expatriates who were considered necessary for the operation of the station. This offer could not be accepted, but it was agreed that the period of initial technical assistance could be prolonged, provided the individual concerned was willing. It was also agreed that those who gave such service should remain employees of RVOG and the period was limited to two weeks.

Within that period travel arrangements, packing of personal belongings and formalities to leave the country were all taken care of. Most of the expatriates had returned to their home countries before April 1st. Some were visiting area studios on special assignments. On April 18th, the "Interim Office" was closed and the following day Flemming Kramp, Associate Director, and myself, together with our families, left the country.

Those expatriate staff members who could not be offered other assignments or preferred to seek other employment were given contractual termination benefits and resettlement allowances based on the particular circumstances in each case.

The third question had to do with archive documents and other items which were of particular value to LWF which all had been confiscated. The "Interim Office" submitted a detailed list of such documents and items with a request that they should be released as soon as possible.

This matter was discussed with government representatives on three different occasions. The final decision was that "all files, documents and other items must be considered nationalized. LWF should therefore only request release of such items which were of exclusive value to the Federation. We were told that the Government was in favour of releasing such items, but after it had been given time to carefully go through the material. We were requested to review the list submitted and reduce it to such items which could not be questioned ... Our request that representatives of the Federation should within a period of four months return to settle this matter was in principle agreed to." (Notes from negotiations on April 13th).

In spite of repeated reminders and visits, the requested items are still, after six years, not released.

In addition to these major issues, the "Interim Office" had to deal with a number of administrative matters, such as closing of RVOG accounts, arrangements for auditing and settlement of pending matters. When the "Interim Office" was closed on April 18th, the RVOG affairs were transferred to Geneva.

4.2.2. Claim for Compensation

When the establishment and operation of the radio station was negotiated with the Ethiopian Government in 1961, a premature termination of the contract, by nationalization of the property, was not foreseen. How such a situation should be handled was not mentioned in the agreement. The legal basis for a settlement when the station was taken over had therefore to be found in the Civil Code of the country and in international law.

To clarify the legal implications in case the station should be nationalized or damaged in the ongoing political upheavals in the country, Marc Chambron asked the legal firm, Lalive & Budin in Geneva, to study the matter and advise LWF on what should be done in case something should happen to the radio station. This was done in June 1976.

In a detailed memorandum, dated October 28, 1976, Dr. Jean-Flavien Lalive outlined the legal basis on which a settlement could be negotiated. It was made clear that the Government had the right to take over the property, but also that LWF had the right to claim compensation. It was on that basis that the LWF General Secretary, Dr. Carl Mau, following the nationalization, informed the Ethiopian Head of State, Lt. Col. Mengestu Haile Mariam, in an official letter, that LWF reserved the right to submit a compensation claim in due time.

The LWF intention to seek a legal settlement with the Ethiopian Government was also supported by the Church/media consultation held at Kitwe, Zambia, in November 1977. The following resolution was unanimously passed at that meeting:

"We invite the African churches to voice, through the AACC, their support of legal actions undertaken by the owner of the station aimed at either re-acquiring the property or securing compensation for the same."
(Kitwe Proceedings, p.6).

Provision for handling of such claims had, in the meantime, also been made by the Ethiopian Government by setting up a special "Compensation Commission".

On February 3rd, 1978, the LWF Board of Trustees considered the first outline for a claim to be submitted to the Ethiopian Government. The Geneva staff was then requested to compile necessary documentation and submit the material for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

The first draft of the document was prepared in the following months in consultation with the legal advisor, Lalive & Budin, and was presented to the LWF/COC Officers at their meeting on August 21st for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The recommendation of the

Officers was that the claim should be submitted to the appropriate authorities in Ethiopia and that it should be actively followed up.

The following day the Board of Trustees approved the document and recommended to the LWF Executive Committee that an amount of US$ 8,235,500 should be claimed as compensation for the loss of the RVOG property.

The text had been prepared by the legal advisors Lalive & Budin and the calculations had been made on the basis of replacement value less depreciation at a normal rate per annum. After final editing, the document was mailed to appropriate authorities in Ethiopia in early September 1978.

In February 1980 Dr. Taliadoros of the Lalive & Budin visited Addis Ababa and met with the Compensation Commission. He was then requested to provide supplementary documentation which was sent to Addis Ababa in April.

The first official acknowledgement of the claim in writing from the Compensation Commission did not come until December 1980.

The COC Officers had in the meantime reviewed the matter and authorized a second visit to Addis Ababa. I was asked to undertake this assignment and also try to negotiate release of the confiscated archives or part of them which was in the hands of the Ministry of Information. During my stay in the Ethiopian capital in February/March, I had several conversations with the Minister of Information and other officials at the Ministry and I also met with a representative of the Compensation Commission. I was promised that both the request for release of the archived documents and the compensation question should be taken up in due time. No further word has been received so far.

At times the question has been raised: Why compensation? The answer to that question is obvious. RVOG was established and operated on the basis of a negotiated and legal agreement between the LWF and the Ethiopian Government. It is therefore a matter of legal obligation and Christian duty to depart on the basis of a mutual agreement. LWF is accepting the fact that the Government had the right to nationalize the property, but considers it a Christian obligation to negotiate a settlement. The LWF efforts to reach such a settlement have so far not been successful.

4.2.3. Planning for Continued Communication Ministries

Among the many implications which nationalization of the broadcasting facilities in Addis Ababa had for the Lutheran World Federation, the most serious one had to do with the obligations that the Federation had to the local churches and audiences which, for so long, had been dependent on these facilities. There were 12 program production studios with well over 200 employees which suddenly were left without a regular outlet for their production. There were also millions of listeners for whom RVOG had become their daily source of information and "their friend" who talked to them in their own language, encouraged them and gave advice. The immediate reactions from the listeners showed how much the daily RVOG transmissions meant to the millions of people for whom these had become a part of daily life and particularly for those in remote areas with few or no alternative radio program to tune in to.

At the same time as nationalization of RVOG came at a time when a replanning of the whole operation was due, it also created a severe and acute problem of how to resume the service without too much delay and damage.

In line with the "Contingency Plan", it was therefore suggested that teams of RVOG staff should, as soon as possible, undertake a survey in the entire service area. The purpose of this survey should be to find interim solutions and possible alternative means by which the churches and their studios could carry on their communication ministries, and to find out what kind of assistance they needed.

Marc Chambron at the Geneva office, in consultation with the ecumenical partners, worked out a plan for this survey in a couple of weeks following the nationalization.

On March 26-27, just two weeks after the station had been taken over, a joint consultation was held at Ferney Voltaire, near Geneva, with representatives of AACC, WACC and LWF/COC. At that meeting the three organizations agreed that the proposed survey of the African broadcast targets was necessary and urgent, while the Middle East area had recently been surveyed and the India studios should be dealt with later.

Three ecumenical "survey teams" were set up and it was expected that they should carry out their assignments and report their findings at the extraordinary meeting of LWF/COC which was scheduled to be held in connection with the LWF General Assembly at Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in June 1977. After having received and carefully studied the reports and the various recommendations from the "survey teams", the LWF/COC felt that it was necessary to arrange a consultation with concerned parties later in the year to discuss concrete plans for future assistance.

The consultation took place on November 7-11, 1977 at the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre at Kitwe, Zambia, and brought together some 60 participants from 25 countries, representing local churches, media institutions, ecumenical organizations, as well as supporting agencies and churches. The three cooperating organizations (LWF/COC, WACC and AACC) were now requested by the Consultation to initiate immediate action which should:

"a) secure regular access to adequate transmission outlets as additional and supplementary broadcast facilities to any regional and national outlet; and

b) provide for future expansion."

The meeting also recommended that a permanent consultative services unit be established. This unit should be:

"a body of professional Christian communicators which should serve the churches in the use of media in their ministry". (Kitwe Proceedings, pp.1-2)

The Search for New Radio Outlets

The LWF/COC-WACC Coordinating Committee, at its meeting in Geneva in early April 1978, emphasized the great urgency to find new radio outlets, and requested the LWF Office of Communication in Geneva to function as convenor and secretariate for all efforts in the follow-up of the Kitwe Consultation. Three guiding principles for the search of new radio outlets were also agreed upon:

a) The continued radio ministry should be ecumenical which meant that the cooperating partners should act jointly.

b) The continued radio ministry should be decentralized which meant there should be several broadcasting facilities in order to be less vulnerable in political struggles.

c) To avoid major capital investments, existing facilities should be used as far as possible.

In the following months a number of broadcasting institutions in Africa were studied on site and preliminary talks were held with respective management and the country's authorities. At its meeting in October the same year the Coordinating Committee requested staff to urgently explore possibilities to rent broadcasting facilities in Sierra Leone, Zambia, Seychelles and Gabon, which in preliminary investigations and negotiations with concerned authorities had been found to be potential options.

In the meantime, the AACC Communication Management Board had also discussed these questions. The Board had expressed appreciation of the technical groundwork which had been done and recommended the establishment of a joint committee which in the future should deal with these questions. This initiative taken by AACC was received with appreciation by both LWF/COC and the WACC.

The first meeting with an aim to establish such a joint committee was held in Nairobi, Kenya on September 25th the same year and all three organizations were represented. The Roman Catholics had also been invited but were unable to attend. On December 4th, 1978 a second meeting of this new committee was convened in Nairobi. At that meeting LWF/COC was requested to postpone further explorations of transnational broadcasting possibilities within Africa and give time for a more thorough investigation of local or national possibilities.

The Committee further suggested that time should be allowed for the establishment of a proper ecumenical cooperation including Roman Catholics. A secretariate should also be set up in Nairobi which should take over the responsibility for the continued search for new radio outlets, it was suggested. LWF/COC was now in a dilemma. The local churches in Africa were getting more and more impatient and the Geneva office was under heavy pressure to find ways and means to replace the RVOG services in accordance with the Kitwe recommendations. To postpone further efforts to do that would also mean that some of the options at the time would no longer be available and the search would have to start all over again.

At its annual meeting at Divonne, France, in April 1979, the LWF/COC therefore decided to continue cooperation with the ecumenical partners and support the Coordinating Committee for Christian Communication in

Africa (CCCCA) which was being formed and at the same time on its own continue to explore possibilities to meet the urgent requests from the local churches which had been using RVOG.

As of that year, LWF/COC, together with concerned LWF member churches, initiated formal negotiations with several broadcasting agencies and provided broadcasting facilities for some of the area studios. At the same time the ecumenical cooperation continued as previously.

Consultative Services

Even before the nationalization of RVOG, plans had been prepared for an ecumenical consultative services unit to be established and operate independently from RVOG. There were several reasons for this proposal. One was that in case the broadcasting service of RVOG should be disrupted, this unit should be in the position to assist the churches in their continued communication ministries.

At its 1976 meeting the LWF/COC considered a recommendation to this effect from the RVOG Consultation on Long-Range Planning in November 1975. It was then decided to refer the proposal to the COC Director, Marc Chambron who was requested to work out a concrete plan.

We also recall that both the "RVOG Contingency Plan" and the Kitwe Proceedings referred to a consultative services unit as an item of priority.

The implementation of these plans followed two lines:

a) Efforts to set up a permanent ecumenical consultative services unit.

b) Establishing and running of an interim consultative services unit to meet the immediate needs and to function until the permanent unit was fully operational.

The original proposal of 1975 and the ultimate goal was to set up a permanent ecumenical consultative service. At the Kitwe Consultation it was said:

"In setting up of the Unit the following principles should be applied: i) that the Unit be attached to an organization that can offer the widest possible contact with African churches; ii) that such services be carried out in closest possible coordination with the existing training institutions, such as the Africa Literature Centre (ALC), Kitwe, the

AACC Training Centre, Nairobi, and the FEMEC studio, Yaounde; and iii) that the governing body of this Unit include representatives of the WACC Africa Region, LWF/COC and the AACC."

In line with this recommendation the implementation of the plans for a permanent Unit was linked up with a "Training Review Committee" which had been set up in 1977 to evaluate the existing communication training facilities in Africa. The matter was later referred to the CCCCA for implementation which meant further delay.

To meet the immediate need for consultative services following the nationalization of RVOG, LWF/COC took the following action at its meeting in June 1977:

"Since the establishment of a Consultative Services Unit on an ecumenical basis is still under discussion and since the local training and consultancy provided by RVOG at the area studios in the field of communication proved to answer a genuine and urgent need which will still exist during the transition period, the COC VOTED to establish the following trainer/consultants positions:
- Production Trainers/Consultants (1 electronic and 1 general)
- Journalism Trainer/Consultant
- Technical Trainers/Consultants (2)
- Personnel Development Trainer/Consultant
- Promotion Consultant."

(LWF/COC.m.June 1977:5).

This interim unit was named "Communication Unit for Africa" (CUFA). The reason why this service unit focused on Africa was that the Middle East and India studios, with the exception of the Madras studio, were all sponsored by the WACC and the follow-up questions for these areas were handled by WACC in consultation with LWF/COC. The Madras studio continued to be sponsored by the Lutheran Hour in USA. It was therefore natural that CUFA concentrated its services to Africa.

At the time when the Kitwe Consultation was held, in November 1977, CUFA was already in operation. The Consultation expressed appreciation for its services and recommended that this unit continue to serve the churches and studios in Africa until such a time as the permanent unit "is fully operational".

Under the able leadership of Flemming Kramp, previous Associate RVOG Director, this unit rendered a valuable and appreciated service during the following years by arranging planning and training workshops and providing professional assistance to studios and churches.

At a meeting in August 1978 the LWF/COC Officers decided, however, to phase out CUFA in spite of the fact that the ecumenical unit had not yet been established. After a lengthy discussion it was decided:

"to extend the service period of the entire CUFA staff until mid-1979, with four members serving until the end of December 1979."

(LWF/COC Officers August 1978).

This decision was not well received by the churches which had benefitted by the services of CUFA. It was, however, hoped that by phasing out CUFA the establishment of the permanent unit should be speeded up, which unfortunately did not happen.

With all this planning and interim arrangements, the intention and aim of LWF/COC was to find a way to meet the needs and continue the service which RVOG had rendered.

A new chapter in the RVOG broadcasting ministry had begun.

4.3. The RVOG Experience in Retrospect

Operation of Radio Voice of the Gospel was not an experience in isolation. Without giving due attention to related contemporary developments, the RVOG story would not only be incomplete, but also lose much of its significance.

Some of these developments were well under way or could be foreseen at the time when the project was in its planning and implementation stages. Others were unexpected and had implications for the radio station which were not anticipated. Among the latter were the political developments in the host country which led to an abrupt termination of the operation.

Looking at the RVOG experience in retrospect, the interplay between the broadcasting ministry and those contemporary developments appears to be both obvious and intriguing.

We shall in the following pages look at the RVOG broadcasting ministry in its wider context which includes political and church-mission developments as well as developments in media technology in the service areas of RVOG.

The fact that the operation of the radio station coincided with a period of revolutionary changes and developments in these sectors gives a special significance to the role and function of RVOG. We shall therefore briefly look at the main trends and developments in these three sectors during the period when RVOG was in operation.

4.3.1. Political Developments

The all overshadowing political issues in the projected service areas of RVOG at the time when it was getting ready for its broadcasting ministry, were liberation from the colonial oppression and attainment of national independence.

This political reality was already reflected in the search of a suitable location for the radio station in 1958. Among the considerations which led to the choice of Ethiopia was also its political status. (cf.supra, p.37). Ethiopia was at the time considered to be a symbol for national independence. Even if there were many other factors involved in the choice of Ethiopia, this consideration indicated a desire to give the radio station a political image which in the ongoing developments would strengthen its credibility and keep a distance to the political West.

Before we take up some aspects of the RVOG operation which have to do with the political dimensions of its broadcasting ministry, we shall briefly take a look at the general trends and developments which are of particular relevance to the RVOG story.

External and Internal Political Problems

Two major political problems remained to be resolved when the struggle for national independence was over. One had to do with foreign relations and the other with domestic affairs. National integrity and the right of self-determination had to be safeguarded by a foreign relations policy which did not leave room for any interference from outside and equally important was also the question of nation-building.

The first issue was of a common interest for all independent states in the area. It was therefore taken up and discussed at the important summit meeting at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 where, for the first time, Heads

of State from the two continents met for consultations about their common future. It was agreed at that time, that their basic foreign relations policy would be that of "a positive neutrality". This agreement indicated their determination not to identify with any of the two political power-blocks - East or West - and thereby compromise their integrity and endanger their freedom.

Even if Africa, due to prolonged colonial administration in the continent, was poorly represented at the Bandung meeting, the African leaders later came out as strong supporters of the policy adopted at that time. An official declaration to that effect was made at the first conference of African independent states, held in Accra, Ghana, in 1958. In the following years individual leaders also made repeated statements along the same line. (Legum 1963:43-44).

The Bandung policy of "positive neutrality" was later modified into a "non-alliance" policy which meant a certain dilution of the original concept. Soon after the Bandung meeting there were indications of an initial division among the independent states with regard to their relations to the two power-blocks - East and West. The fact that the Soviet Union was invited to the meeting of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement in Cairo in 1957 was an indication of the start of deviation from the course which had been agreed upon in 1955. Not all seem to have been in agreement with this new trend. At a meeting of the Non-Allied States in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, four years later, only one third of the independent African states were represented. (Legum, op.cit. p.79). Another indication of the same trend was the groupings into "reformist" and "revolutionary" regimes in Africa and the Arab world in the following years. Not even the success in forming the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1963 restored the "unity".

In spite of all this the Non-Allied States kept together and so did the Organization for African Unity. Both played important roles in the following years.

The second question which had to be resolved after independence was, as indicated above, of a domestic nature. Here we note that even if some

nations had less difficulties in sorting out their post-colonial domestic problems than others, all of them had to find workable models in their particular situation, and there were no short cuts to the final solutions. The search of models and the choices made by the political leaders in power, led to internal tension, power-struggle and open conflicts in many countries shortly after independence. This was the case in Asia and even more so in Africa where the colonial balkanization of the continent as well as the ethnic/religious diversities made the situation extremely complex. The Middle East had its specific internal problems deriving from the Palestinian question and the territorial claims of Israel.

It is not within the scope of this study to discuss the underlying issues nor to give a more detailed account of the developments of socio-political unrest which followed national independence in this geographical area. We shall only make a few observations, with the aim of describing the context in which RVOG operated.

There seem to be at least three factors which contributed to the revolutionary course which the political developments took in the area during the two decades when RVOG was in operation.

The first was a growing political awareness, especially among young people and students at that time. The political struggle prior to independence and the discussions that went with it, as well as the expectation that there was a better future ahead of them had no doubt prepared the ground for this awareness. The new opportunities to make a political career had certainly also stimulated many educated young people to engage in politics. What perhaps contributed more than anything else to political awareness was the increased flow of information which was provided through modern public media. There is no doubt that the increased access to radio and other media, which we shall come back to, played an important role in this connection. The impact of these media was naturally greatest on young educated people who were able to follow not only the domestic newscasts and other public information, but also similar broadcasts from international stations.

Exposure to this information flow widened the horizon of the listeners and readers. It brought in new ideas and moulded the political thinking.

People began to see things around them in a different light. One result of this seems to have been a gradual deterioration of the image of the political West. The British writer and africanist, Colin Legum, observes that at the beginning of the 1960's most of the independent states in Africa were "neutral on the side of the West". At the end of the decade this was no longer the case. (Op.cit.p.80). There were many good reasons for this development. The Vietnam war, the Middle East situation, the unresolved problems in southern Africa and the grave global injustice were all issues which made the West appear as imperialistic and neo-colonialistic. This image of the West penetrated deep into the young generation in this part of the world during the 1960's. A second factor which contributed to political unrest and led to internal conflicts in many countries shortly after independence was an ideological confrontation within the nations. To begin with nationalism had served as an "ideological umbrella" under which all felt that they belonged together and had a common task, namely the building of a strong and free nation.

When social changes went slowly and injustices continued, and when ethnic groups were discriminated against, nationalism could no longer keep the dissatisfied segments in society together. Radical action groups and liberation movements began to cause unrest in many countries. Most of these radical groups and liberation movements had a strong ethnic component, but what constituted and motivated them was an ideology which would take care of their specific interests. The continued struggle in South-East Asia in the 1960's and the attempt to overthrow the Indonesian government in 1965 were caused by such ideological confrontations. In Africa the series of military coups and guerilla activities which began in the mid-1960's also derived from dissatisfaction with the established rulers and their handling of domestic government affairs. In not less than 19 countries in Africa civilian governments had been overthrown between 1966 and 1970 and had been replaced by military rulers. More such revolutions followed in the 1970's. It was in this process that Marxism also entered the political scene in Africa. (Davidson, 1979:292). A third factor which contributed to the political developments in the area at this time was external interference in internal conflicts – an interference which the political leaders of the independent nations to begin with were determined to resist. Ten years after Bandung, the policy of "positive

neutrality" had become obsolete and the area had become a battle-field for the big political power-blocks. Internal conflicts were used as bride-heads for intervention and expansion of their spheres of interest with a view to strengthening their military positions.

In Asia the Vietnam war was a tragic example of how an internal conflict, through outside support, escalated into a massive and prolonged military intervention. In the Middle East the big powers were also in the background all the time in the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbours and gave support. We recall that after the defeat of Egypt in June 1967 the rebuilding of Egypt's military strength was done with the assistance of the Soviet Union and Israel got similar assistance from the West. In the conflict between Jordan and the Palestinians in 1970, the external military support to involved countries was stepped up further. It is this which has made the Middle East the most explosive area in our time.

The same happened in Africa too at this time. The well-known African nationalist and writer, Ndabaninì Sithole, has, in his book "African Nationalism", described how the two super-powers stood ready to assist and when a country received help from one side, the other got disturbed. He expressed his feelings in the following words: "If only the two parties would remember that Africa is not for sale! ... Keep your hands off Africa!" (Sithole, 1968:229). What happened in the continent of Africa was the opposite. The so-called "reformist" regimes were supported by the West and the "revolutionary" regimes got help from the East in their internal conflicts.

Having mentioned these revolutionary developments in this part of the world at that time and the interrelated factors which contributed to them, it would be unfair not to mention the efforts made to bring about positive developments at the same time. We recall that the feeling of guilt in the western world and the readiness to compensate for ills made in the past led to massive efforts to bridge the gap between the developing and the industrialized world through development aid.

To begin with there was a widespread optimism that those efforts should bring about positive and early results, but we remember how it was soon discovered that the expectations were unrealistic and that the efforts did not yield anticipated results.

It was these developments and experiences which made up the political context in which RVOG carried out its broadcasting ministry. Looking at these developments in retrospect, we realize that the dream about a better future - a world in peace and prosperity - which many had at the time when the radio project was launched, turned out to be an illusion. What developed during these two decades was a conflict-ridden and divided world - politically and ideologically divided into East-West and economically into North-South. Most of the newly independent nations in this part of the world were also torn apart internally by tensions and conflicts.

What then did these developments mean to RVOG? Where did the radio station stand politically, and what was its role?

Socio-Political Dimensions of the RVOG Operation

The question of whether RVOG played a political role and, if so, how this role is to be defined is not easily answered. Any broadcasting service which has an ambition to be contextual and relevant in its operation, is bound to be involved in contemporary developments, either deliberately and openly or by implication of its message. RVOG was in this respect no exception.

There was certainly no intention whatsoever that the LWF radio station should be used for political purposes or that it should be directly involved in political issues. One of the basic conditions for operation of the radio station in Ethiopia was also that it should not involve itself in political questions. This condition had been agreed upon and had also been written into the contract which had been signed with the Ethiopian Government. (cf.supra, p.140). We can therefore say that, according to its basic purpose and policy, RVOG was an apolitical operation.

At the same time, it is also clear that if RVOG was to live up to its professional ambitions and also remain faithful to the Gospel, its ministry was bound to have socio-political implications. By the design of its structure, by commitment to the Gospel and by its professional ambitions to be contextual and relevant, its ministry had socio-political dimensions which should not be ignored. To deny or shy away from this fact would be to give the RVOG operation a distorted and false image.

In the final analysis it is not the "westernness" of the RVOG operation which made up its political dimension, but its structure and its message.

When the radio project was built into a wide network of local churches, it was also given its most important political dimension. Those churches were there long before the radio project was conceived and they were all in various ways political factors in their respective societies.

With the exception of the great Orthodox churches in the Middle East and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, all the RVOG related churches had grown out of the missionary movement in the 19th and 20th centuries. Even if those churches have been discredited together with the missionary movement itself because of collaboration with the colonial administration, they were at the same time important factors in the liberation process. Through their message, their educational institutions and other social activities, they played a vital role in preparing the ground for the turn in history which meant an end to the colonial era.

It was in mission and church schools that the political leaders of the post-colonial Africa received their basic education. The same is to a lesser degree true for Asia and the Middle East too. A Swedish researcher, Dr. David Westerlund, has recently analysed the role of the Christian churches in the political developments in post-colonial Africa south of Sahara. His findings have also confirmed this assessment. He pointed out in his report that the higher educational standard of the Christians made them politically more influential than the followers of Islam and traditional religions. (Westerlund, 1981:6).

It should be noted that the socio-political effects of the educational program which was carried out in Asia and Africa by foreign missions and indigenous Christian churches were not limited to leaders only. In his book "Africa in Modern History", the British historian, Basil Davidson, talks about "a political middle class" which to some degree consisted of Christians. (Davidson, 1979:213). Canon Max Warren, in his book "Social History and Christian Mission", also talks about "creation of a bourgeoisie". (Warren, 1967:116). David Westerlund observes in his above-mentioned research report that Protestant Christians were in general politically more progressive than other groups and served more frequently as change agents in their respective societies.

Similar views were also advanced by the African scholar, Dr. Christian Baeta, when he gave his plenary address at the Second All Africa Lutheran Conference at Antsirabe, Madagascar, in 1960. He spoke on the theme: "The Church in Changing Africa" and said that the most important thing in the changing Africa was the change of men and that it was here that the Christian church had made a great contribution. (Antsirabe Report, LWF/CWM 1960:46-50). In this connection it is also interesting to note the political awareness which was reflected in lectures and discussions at the three All Africa Lutheran Conferences arranged by LWF/CWM during this period. *)

All these observations indicate that by making the local churches in this geographical area an integral part of the RVOG operation an important political dimension was built into the radio project. The strengthening of those churches and the provision of technical facilities for broadcasting of their message was an important political dimension of the radio ministry. One example of this is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, which played an increasingly important role in the Ethiopian society as a progressive political factor.

The other aspect of the socio-political dimension of RVOG has to do with the message itself. We have extensively dealt with the radio ministry and its holistic approach in previous sections, and we need not here go into any detail regarding the implications of this approach. We recall that the Gospel was understood and interpreted as a message which had to do with all aspects of life. It was not only an other-worldly message but had to do with real life situations for real people. We have also pointed out earlier how the increased information flow contributed to a political awareness. The role of RVOG was in this respect to be "a beam of truth" and bring across to the listeners Christian concepts and values which should help them deal with the socio-political issues in their situation.

The RVOG news service was part of this role. We have already seen how the news service was considered a Christian obligation and not just to

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*) Marangu, Tanganyika 1955
Antsirabe, Madagascar 1960
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1965

catch an audience. The expansion of this service and the heavy emphasis on English and French was a deliberate effort to disseminate objective information and that as many educated people and decision makers as possible should be reached by this "beam of truth".

To the extent RVOG was able to live up to its name - to be a VOICE OF THE GOSPEL - and to pursue its holistic objectives, the RVOG ministry had, by implication, a political dimension which should not be ignored.

The question which the station leadership had to live with all the time was: What does it mean to operate a radio station under the name VOICE OF THE GOSPEL at this particular time and in the midst of these developments?

4.3.2. Church and Mission Developments

Church and mission leaders around the world had, in the 1950's,made great efforts to rethink and replan Christian world mission with an aim to adjusting structures and policies for the post-colonial situation which was already at hand. These efforts had also taken them a long way. On national as well as international levels consultations and conferences had brought them together for penetration of the theological and practical problems involved and much constructive thinking and planning had been done. (cf.supra, pp.21-26).

In spite of all these efforts, many problems remained unresolved at the turn of the decade. The crisis in world mission which had marked the past 10 years, not only continued, but escalated in the 1960's into a sharp controversy over fundamental issues which had to do with the understanding of what Christian world mission was all about in a changed and changing situation.

At the same time as this crisis continued, there were also remarkable developments in the Christian world community at large. The rise and growth of independent churches in former mission areas had become a factor of increasing importance. Not only had this to do with membership and statistics but also with the fact that those churches were no longer objects in mission but were becoming agents. The old idea of a Christian

West and a non-Christian rest of the world was definitely outdated. What Dr. Hendrik Kraemer had already pointed out in the 1930's did, in the post-colonial situation, get a new actuality. (cf.supra, p.25).

Since the basic purpose of RVOG was to assist the Church in her mission, these developments had a bearing on its broadcasting ministry. In retrospect, it seems as though three aspects of the church and mission developments in this period are of particular interest and importance. The first has to do with the concept of mission, the second with the controversy which developed at this time, and the third has to do with the rise and growth of the churches in the Third World.

The Church in Mission

The whole planning and operation of RVOG was based on the philosophy that mission belongs in the Church. It should not be an activity, limited to specialized agencies only, but should involve the whole Church. The extended structure of RVOG which was made up of local churches as well as the basic policy that it was not the station but the local churches which should evangelize, made this understanding clear. RVOG was church-oriented in its ministry. (cf.supra, p.15). In this respect the planning of the radio project also reflected the ongoing missiological debate and the new realities in Christian world mission at the time.

The big issue under debate at the end of the 1950's was integration of mission into the Church. The concrete question had to do with integration of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches, but the issue had a much deeper dimension than that. It had to do with the very concept of mission. The long debate which preceded the formal action of integration at the WCC New Delhi Assembly in 1961 had made this point clear. The issue at stake had not only a structural and practical dimension but a conceptual - the Church in mission.

The IMC World Mission Conference, held in Ghana 1956, seems to have devoted most of its time to this subject. Those who supported the proposed integration pointed out that mission, having developed into an enterprise outside and separate from the Church, was no longer mission in its biblical sens. It had again to be made the responsibility of the whole Church.

Others were concerned that integration might deprive mission of its uniqueness and devotion. The two concerns were expressed in the question: "Are we in danger of making the concept and practice of mission so broad and diffuse that it loses its distinctive character and 'cutting edge'? Or are we, on the other hand, in danger of limiting it in such a way that our practice fails to express the fulness of the Gospel or to meet the real needs of men today?"(The IMC Ghana Report, quotation by Scherer, 1982:64).

The same subject continued to be discussed in the following years, and when the WCC General Assembly convened in New Delhi 1961, the "ecumenical world" was ready to take the formal action. The International Missionary Council which had served as an international forum for mission concerns during half a century, was integrated into the World Council of Churches. Dr. James Scherer describes this action as "an end and a new beginning" – a beginning under the motto: "One Body, One Gospel, One World". This motto had been formulated by the IMC last General Secretary, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, who also became the first Director of the New WCC Division on World Mission and Evangelism. (Scherer, op.cit.p.68, 71).

The New Delhi action and even more so the preceding discussions, had set in motion a process of church-mission integration on the local church level which made the 1960's a decade when traditional relationships were reviewed and many mission agencies integrated their field administration into the local churches. At the same time, this development alarmed large groups of the so-called "Conservative Evangelicals" who saw this as a danger to the missionary task. In a document known as the "Wheaton Declaration", issued in 1966, and which we shall come back to, it was stated: "The proper relationship between churches and missions can only be realized in a co-operative partnership in order to fulfil the mission of the Church to evangelize the world in this generation. The mission society exists to evangelize, to multiply churches and strengthen existing churches. Therefore we recognize the continuing distinction between the church established on the field and the missionary agency." (Wheaton Declaration 1966:9).

We have already called attention to the fact that RVOG was structurally and conceptually church-oriented in its ministry, and that the whole

operation was based on the concept of the Church in mission. Consistent with this concept, RVOG was not a "missionary radio station" in the sense that it was a "free evangelist in the air". It was there at the disposal of the local churches. In the same way RVOG also consistently refused to broadcast syndicated programs produced by agencies in distant lands. Here is one of the characteristics of RVOG which made up its "personality" and made its operation different from most of the radio stations owned and operated by the "Conservative Evangelicals".

Adoption of the concept that mission belongs in the Church and the church-oriented operation of RVOG did, however, not mean identification with the mission theology which the WCC stood for in the 1960's. The controversy which followed the New Delhi Assembly and which reached its climax around the Uppsala Assembly in 1968 should again have implications for the RVOG ministry.

The Controversy

It was realized at the New Delhi Assembly that if the Church was to be able to live up to its new role in mission, it must be equipped for it. An international study on "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation" was therefore authorized. This action was taken because it was felt that "one of the main hindrances in the pursuit of the evangelistic calling of the Church laid in the traditional structure of the local congregation". (WCC New Delhi Report, quoted by Scherer op.cit.p.76). It was this international study and the debate it generated in the period between the assemblies of New Delhi and Uppsala which caused the controversy at that time.

An analysis of the underlying issues and an account of how the controversy developed would take us too far and detract attention from the RVOG operation. We shall therefore only recall that the focus was in this controversy moved from the Church in mission to God's mission or "missio Dei" in the world and consequently it was suggested that it was the world which should set the agenda. Previously critical views advanced by Dr. J.C. Hoekendijk and others on the "churchification" of mission and the "church-centric missionary activities"were now fed into the study. The role of the Church in mission was subsequently reduced and the world was

brought into focus as "the locus for God's mission". (Scherer, op.cit, pp.74-75)

The consequence of this thinking was that mission became so inclusive that its specific task of proclaiming the Gospel as the only means of salvation was in danger of being neglected and even lost all together.

At this juncture some Evangelical missionary agencies in the United States which belonged to the previously mentioned World Evangelical Fellowship (cf.supra, p.23), were alarmed by the new and radical views advanced in the Ecumenical Movement. An international "Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission" was therefore arranged at Wheaton, Illinois, in 1966. This Congress which gathered almost a thousand delegates from 71 countries, issued the first document in reaction to the new trend in mission theology. This document, known as the "Wheaton Declaration" was marked by a deep concern that the biblical understanding of the missionary obligation of the Church had to be safeguarded.

A similar conference was also held in Berlin later in the same year. That conference also issued a strong statement along the same lines.

The reports produced by the ecumenical study groups in Europe and North America, and circulated as preparatory documents for the Uppsala Assembly, caused further reactions. The Lutheran World Federation contributed with a careful analysis of the study reports which was published in 1968 under the title "Sources for Change".

To what extent the strong reactions from the "Conservative Evangelicals" and critical comments from others, including the LWF, contributed to curb the trend in the debate is probably difficult to say. What is obvious is that substantial modifications were made in the final report "Renewal in Mission" which was adopted by the Uppsala Assembly.

We should also recall that the controversy continued in the first half of the 1970's and that new elements were brought in when conservative theologians in Germany issued the so-called "Frankfurt Declaration" in 1970 and when WCC/CWME convened at Bangkok around the topic "Salvation Today".

At the same time it is observed that there was an ecumenical convergence beginning around the central task in mission. Scherer suggests that the WCC General Assembly in Nairobi 1975 can be seen as a turning point. He identifies four major factors which contributed to this:

- The African churches which experienced unprecedented growth were giving particular attention to evangelization.
- The Lausanne Movement had from its formation in 1974 served as a consolidating and sobering factor in the Evangelical world, and had through the "Lausanne Covenant" contributed to a constructive dialogue.
- Orthodox theologians had made a specific contribution to the ecumenical mission theology.
- The Roman Catholics had at a Synod of Bishops in Rome discussed the topic "Evangelization in the Modern World".

All these events and developments which preceded the Nairobi Assembly had contributed to a curbing of the previous trend. (Scherer, op.cit.pp.97-98).

After this brief summary we come back to the question of where RVOG was in this debate and how it affected its ministry. The whole history of the RVOG project - its organizational structure as well as its policy - shows that it was both Evangelical and Ecumenical. For the RVOG operation these two were wrong alternatives from the beginning. We note that here is another feature of the radio project which makes it different from most of the Christian radio stations at that time. In other words, here is one of the characteristics which made up the RVOG "personality". RVOG was "evangelical" in the sense that proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was considered to be its "central mandate". (cf.supra, p.150). In the course of the controversy, repeated statements were made by the leadership of the station to the effect that proclamation of the Gospel should always remain the prime objective of RVOG. The inclusive mission theology advanced in the ecumenical study was therefore unacceptable to RVOG. At the same time the station took seriously the emphasis on the world and the Christian social responsibility which was the concern lifted up in the ecumenical study. RVOG was in this respect as well as in its working relationships also "ecumenical".

In the middle of the controversy it seemed destructive and confusing. It seemed to undermine motivation and dedication in mission. In retrospect, the picture is modified. The controversy had not only negative effects,

but also positive ones:

- Old assumptions and relationships were tested.
- Attention was called to aspects in mission which had been neglected or forgotten.
- Structures and priorities were reviewed.

The controversy seems to have had two specific effects on the RVOG operation. One was a new awareness of the world and the Christian responsibility to do something about the situation. We have already mentioned that in the "Statement of Purpose and Policy" there was right from the beginning provision for a holistic approach in the broadcasting ministry. (cf.supra. p.150). What resulted from the new awareness of the world, its dividedness and injustices, which the controversy had lifted up, was a shift in emphasis. The role of radio in development became a new topic of concern. A year after the Uppsala meeting, RVOG together with WACC, for the first time applied for development funds to finance broadcasting. In the following years the role of RVOG in development was a regular item on the agenda. (cf.supra, p.154).

The other effect on the RVOG ministry of the controversy seems to be a new emphasis on proclamation of the Gospel as an integral part of human development. The fact that proclamation of the Gospel belonged in the development process was realized in a new way. This meant that it was not the world that should set the agenda but there ought to be a "reversed holistic" approach where proclamation of the Gospel had a prime function. This was also what the document on "The Interrelation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development" which the Mekane Yesus Church issued in 1972 and which generated an international discussion at that time, was all about. It should be noted that the concern behind that document was to give proclamation of the Gospel its proper place in development efforts and that criteria for granting of development aid should be reviewed with that in mind.

This brief review of developments has shown that RVOG not only operated during a critical period in world mission, marked by confusion and controversy, but its ministry was also subject to the revision and renewal in mission which took place and it had a role to play just at this time.

Note: The moratorium issue was also part of the controversy but it did not have a direct bearing on RVOG.

The Church in the World

This third aspect of church and mission developments at the time when RVOG was in operation belongs in a different category. Here we shall pay attention to the rise and growth of local churches in former mission areas. This development stands in sharp contrast to what generally was expected at the time when the colonial period ended.

The immediate future for local churches which had grown out of the missionary movement in the 19th and 20th centuries seemed to hold many uncertainties when the colonial administration ended. Like their mission partners they had been protected and to some extent also been supported by the colonial rulers. They had also inherited structures and traditions which made them appear as "quasi-establishments" and they were largely dependent on their overseas partners. What should happen with these churches after the withdrawal of the colonial administration? This was a question which many had. The "dismantling of the colonial framework" which is considered "a blow to the traditional practice in mission" (Scherer, op.cit. p.31), was also feared to be a blow to the local churches.

What happened was the opposite. Dismantling of the colonial framework together with the autonomy which the churches got through integration meant liberation. The churches were liberated to grow their own way. The principle involved in this development was not new. It had been extensively discussed at the Willingen World Mission Conference in 1952 as well as at the Ghana meeting in 1956. The new and surprising thing in the development was that rather than suffer a set back in the new political situation, there was an unprecendented expansion of the Christian Church.

We recall that research findings of Dr. David Barrett at the University of Nairobi, published in 1970, showed that the Christian Church in Africa was growing at an average of 6% per year. His optimistic prediction was that by the end of this century, Africa could be considered a Christian continent. Relating his findings to global church developments he said: "A second and even more significant conclusion from our analysis is that by AD 2.000 the centre of gravity of the Christian world will have shifted markedly southwards from Europe and North America to the developing

continents of Africa and South America." (Barrett, IRM January 1970:39-52).

Some of the RVOG related churches in Africa, like the Evangelical churches in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Madagascar, were, during this period, growing at a rate even higher than Barrett's figures showed. The membership of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, for example, increased between 1960 and 1975 from 20.000 to 320.000.

To what extent the RVOG ministry directly or indirectly contributed to this rapid growth is difficult to say, but if we consider evangelization as a process in which Christian communication at large has its role to play, it is obvious that RVOG contributed to the church growth at that time.

It is also obvious that the expansion of the Christian Church meant an increased listenership. The struggle with the 30-70 formula in program balance must also be seen against this background. It is understandable if some of the local production studios felt that the need for Christian nurture made it necessary to give a bigger share of time to devotional and evangelistic programs.

4.3.3. Developments in Media Technology and the Use of It

In the previous two sections we have made an attempt to relate the RVOG story to political and church/mission developments which were contemporary to this broadcasting venture. We have done this with a view to bringing into focus the specific challenges and opportunities it was faced with and the conditions under which it operated.

Another set of contemporary developments which has to be related to the RVOG story is what took place in the field of technology and more specifically in media technology and the use of it. Also here we can talk about "revolutionary" developments which transformed life conditions in this period more drastically for more people than in any previous period in human history.

We recall that already at the time when the idea of an LWF radio project was first presented in 1957, it was recognized that mankind had entered into "the technological age" and that the Church ought to take advantage of it. We have earlier made reference to what the LWF President,

Bishop Harms Lilje, said about that in his opening address at the General Assembly in Minneapolis that year. At the same meeting, Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli presented his idea of a radio ministry and argued that LWF should also make use of modern media technology which, in his opinion, called for a new strategy and a review of priorities in the mission of the Church.

It should, however, be noted that references made at that time to the "technological revolution" which was under way, not only reflected optimism and fascination but also uncertainty and uneasiness with regard to its implications. Bishop Lilje also pointed out that "there is an intimate relationship between the technological revolution and the fear in which we all live." (LWF/Assembly Proceedings 1957:33).

When we now are in the position to make a retrospective overview of the technological developments in the two decades which followed the General Assembly in 1957, we realize first of all that the "technological revolution" in media communication had only started when RVOG was born and secondly that these developments continued to be both fascinating and disturbing. Innovation of new and better equipment in radio broadcasting as well as the use of it had also implications for the RVOG operation. We shall therefore try to relate these developments to the RVOG story with special attention to the search for a meaningful and responsible use of modern communication media.

Expansion and Distribution of Media technology

Bishop Lilje spoke in 1957 of "a technological civilization from which no part of the world was excepted". This was indeed true with regard to media technology already at that time. Shortwave broadcasting had made its major break-through both with regard to transmitters and transistor receivers in the early 1950's. (cf.supra, p.26 ff). This medium had already at that time a coverage "from which no part of the world was excepted". What developed in the following two decades was a fantastic expansion. It was in this period that satellites were put into space and manned spacecraft began to orbit the earth. In 1957 the first satellite was successfully lauched and in 1969 we could on our TV screens watch the first landing on the moon and communicate directly with the men out there some 400.000 kms. away. This was also the period when satellite communication was introduced.

There was also a fantastic expansion in conventional media technology in this period. We have already in the first section of our study indicated this development with the view to giving the RVOG story a proper background. (cf.supra, p.26 ff). Our main objective here, in this survey, is to show the technological reality in which RVOG carried out its ministry and the implications it had on the operation.

At the beginning of this period it is estimated that there were approximately 400 shortwave transmitters in the world. At the end of the period there were some 1,500 and those were much more powerful too. Those 1.500 transmitters were together using about 25.000 frequency hours daily which meant that available meterbands were so crowded that it was considered to be "a crisis situation". (WRTH 1959:36-41). The explanation to this fantastic expansion has to do with the constantly improving effectiveness of technical equipment both at the transmitting and receiving end.

Shortwave broadcasting did in this period become the most indispensible form for international and interhuman communication. One expert has pointed out that "technically, it is the only broadcasting medium capable of direct, universal, personal and immediate communication between the peoples of the world". (George Jacobs, WRTH 1979:36)

The table below gives a few examples of the volume that shorwave radio broadcasting reached in this period.

Table 1: Examples of shortwave broadcasting in 1978

Transmitting country	Broadcast hours/week	Broadcast languages
Soviet Union	2.010	62
United States	1.813	36
China	1.400	43
West Germany	800	34
Great Britain	750	38

Some 26 countries used more than 100 hours per week for shortwave broadcasting in their external services and over 80 countries were engaged in international broadcasting. It is also estimated that during an ordinary day, between 200-300 million people listened to shortwave broadcasting

Sources: UNESCO MacBride Report "Many Voices One World" 1980:75 & WRTH 1979.

A similar expansion in the use of radio as a communication medium is also noted at the receiving end. Here we also observe that the growth-rate of radio receivers was higher in Asia and Africa than in any other part of the world in this period. While the global growth-rate at that time was 5,9% per annum, Africa had 9.9% and Asia 9.7% (UN World Statistics 1977).

The table below gives the actual figures.

Table 2: Number of radio receivers 1960-1976 (in 1.000)

Year	Asia	Africa	World Total
1960	21.000	4.000	363.000
1965	42.000	10.000	525.000
1970	58.000	16.000	672.000
1976	113.000	30.000	953.000

Sources: ITU 1977 quoted by the UNESCO report "Many Voices One World" 1980:132.

All these facts indicate that the expansion of shortwave broadcasting continued and that "no part of the world was excepted".

At the same time as the increasing number of radio receivers in its service areas meant a growing potential audience, the expanded use of shortwave broadcasting also had negative implications on the RVOG operation. An analysis of the broadcast languages, which are indicated in table 1 above, shows that a heavy share of the transmissions were beamed into the RVOG broadcast areas which meant a congestion on available frequencies allocated to the station. The Technical Director, Kebede Gobana, made a study of this in 1975 and found that at peak listening hours, the congestion of transmissions and the total radiated power into a given area had reached a level which made the RVOG equipment out-classed. If the station should continue to provide a reliable and clear signal its transmitting power had to be increased.

This development also meant that a greater choice for the audiences also increased the competition.

What was most disturbing and caused most concern was, however, not so much the quantitative expansion in media technology as the use of it. We shall therefore turn our attention to this aspect.

Search for Directions in the Use of Modern Media

We recall that there was considerable uncertainty among media communicators - both Christian and secular- towards the end of the 1960's as to how modern media should be used meaningfully and responsibly. Experiences and research findings called at that time for a review of old assumptions at the same time as invention of new media opened up new avenues in communication. For these reasons the 1970's became the decade when extensive studies were carried out in the search for new directions in the use of available technical facilities and equipment for mass communication.

It was in this context that the LWF Task Force was set up and carried out an extensive evaluation of the LWF communication ministries which we have referred to on several occasions in previous sections. It was also at this time that the LWF Department of Studies gave Dr.Cees Hamelink the assignment to make an evaluation of "the Church's participation in public communication". (cf.supra, p. 224).

One of the most disturbing trends at that time was the growing inbalance in the use of shortwave broadcasting in the world. The Third World countries found themselves again under domination from outside and began to talk about "a new phase of colonialism". At a series of conferences this question was brought into focus and the demand for a "New World Information Order" became a global issue.

Mr. Dick Perera of the LWF/DOC has in a recent study "Communication and People" pointed out the fact that in the 1970's the developed countries controlled 90% of the source of the electronic spectrum and that 80% of the world's newsemanated from a few western agencies and that only 20-30% dealt with the Third World.(LWF Documentation No.8, 1981).

The growing demand for a "New World Information and Communication Order" prompted UNESCO to set up an international study commission to look into this matter. After two years of intensive work the Commission presented

its report under the title: "Many Voices, One World". This comprehensive study reflects a deep concern and a concerted search for new directions in the use of modern communication media.

Dealing with what is called "the technical dilemma", the UNESCO Commission refers to the present situation where media communication is dominated by a few powerful nations and transnational firms and where local media are controlled by authorities. Considering this situation the Commission says: "Science and technology are constantly making such advances which may one day facilitate breaking down barriers between persons and nations. That trend is without doubt irreversible. But the consequences which can now be foreseen are not necessarily beneficial." The report continues: "It is therefore vital to determine how these technological developments can be of greatest benefit to all nations and, within each nation, to each community and, ultimately, to all men and women." (UNESCO report op.cit. p.31-33). The figures in table 1 above illustrate to a certain extent the problem of inbalance in the use of shortwave radio broadcasting and the implications of that on the global human community.

In the 1970's, RVOG became increasingly aware of these problems and its own exposure to critical assessments along these lines. The fact that RVOG was established just to provide an outlet for indigenous communities which had no or limited access to local networks was not always recognized. Through its network of local production studios, RVOG was there to serve as "a voice of the voiceless". Through its news service RVOG wanted to provide a "beam of truth" in situations where information was restricted and truth often suppressed. In a sense, RVOG was through its structure and intention in the "New World Information and Communication Order" right from the outset.

At the same time the RVOG structure had also to be called into question and reviewed. This was also done by the Task Force which pointed out that the time had come when "the international headquarters must find a new role conception. They are not the key operators", the report of 1972 said. (Task Force Report 1972:4).

In 1975 the RVOG Consultation in Addis Ababa took this issue further by considering major changes in the structure. It was realized that the political as well as the church situation was different from what it was when the radio project was launched. In the background during these deliberations were the political developments in Ethiopia, the new status of the local churches and the demand for a "New World Information and Communication Order".

The following year a staff working group at RVOG dealt extensively with these issues from the point of view of its news service. In its report which was presented to the LWF/COC in 1977, we find the following remark which reflects the considerations and concerns for the immediate future:

"Considering the above-mentioned concerns, RVOG should aim at a new concept of news in line with the "New Information Order" now under discussion on the international level. It has been pointed out that the concept of "free flow of information" is to be seriously questioned since economic, political and cultural power structures are at the "control panel" of the present flow of information.

RVOG is aware of the fact that there are certain mechanics of maintaining the control, directly or indirectly. These mechanics and power structures do not necessarily recognize the right of cultural values and integrity of the so-called Third World countries... In this connection it has been pointed out that we find ourselves in the third phase of the struggle for liberation - to establish conditions for cultural security of information. (Development Dialogue 1976:2,25). As a Christian Radio station, RVOG should take these concerns seriously." (LWF/COC.1977:a.Exh.9A/3 pp.3-4).

It was obvious that a radical review of the RVOG structure and operation policy was due. Developments which we have briefly referred to above as well as internal assessments of the future role of RVOG had made this clear. The LWF/COC had therefore invited the leadership of the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Association for Christian Communication to a consultation in connection with its annual meeting in late March 1977. The purpose of this consultation was to find ways and means to give RVOG a structure and function which was more commensurate to the realities in which it was operating.

At the time when the consultation took place at Ferney-Voltaire, near Geneva, the radio station in Addis Ababa had just been nationalized. The intended review of its structure and operation policy had been preceded by an action of the Ethiopian Government which radically changed the whole situation and enforced on the concerned organizatinns a more radical

review and replanning than had been anticipated.

In a joint statement issued at that time, the three organizations expressed both gratitude for the service RVOG had rendered in the past 14 years and their determinations to continue this ministry.

In the introductory paragraph the statement read:

"We, the representatives of the LWF, the WACC and the AACC, gathered in consultation in Ferney-Voltaire, March 25-27, 1977, having discussed and reflected at length on the nationalization of the RVOG, place on record the following:

"Our thanksgiving and praise to almighty God who through His mercy gave us the opportunity to serve Him by "Proclaiming Christ to His World" in several countries and across national boundaries through the transmissions of the RVOG since its inception in 1963"

In a closing paragraph it was said:

"Finally, our resolve and determination that nationalization of the RVOG will not be regarded by us as a termination of our radio ministry in the areas served by the RVOG, and that the functions discharged by the churches through the RVOG in proclaiming the Gospel and contributing to education, information and development will find new outlets within the general framework of Christian Communication."

The RVOG broadcasting institution in Ethiopia had served its purpose, and its operation had been terminated, but its radio ministry should continue.

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1957: - Dr. Birkeli presented the idea of a radio evangelism project to the LWF/CWM annual meeting from August 2-10 in Staten Island, New York.

- The LWF Third General Assembly convened in Minneapolis from August 15-25. Having heard the proposal, the CWM Terms of Reference were amended and CWM was given the mandate to explore the possibilities of using radio in its mission outreach.

1958: - An official delegation from NECC visited Ethiopia in March to explore the possibilities of establishing a radio station in Asmara for its work in the Near East area.

- In May, the NECC submitted a formal application for a franchise to the Ethiopian Government.

- In August, LWF/CWM met in Sigtuna, Sweden, and approved in principle the approved project.

- In October, the LWF Executive Committee - at its meeting in Strasbourg, France - approved the radio project.

- In November, it was discovered that NECC and LWF were developing similar plans. It was then agreed to let the two requests have their course and wait for the decision of the Ethiopian Government.

1959: - At a meeting in Geneva on June 8 and 9, the "Geneva Agreement" between the LWF and NECC was negotiated and signed.

- On November 27, LWF was given the franchise to build and operate a radio station in Ethiopia.

- In anticipation that permission should be given, LWF/CWM engaged Pastor Allan Thompson as Administrative Director already in June.

- In December, Dr. Sigurd Aske was appointed Director of the radio project for one year.

1960: - In January, temporary office facilities were rented in Addis Ababa and Dr. Herbert Schaefer was made Deputy Director.

APPENDIX II

1960: (cont'd)
- In February, Pastor Allan Thompson moved to Addis Ababa and began to build up an administrative staff.
- On June 28, at a meeting in Geneva, an agreement of cooperation between the LWF and the LUTHERAN HOUR was negotiated, which also meant a contribution of US$ 100.000 towards capital investment by L.H.
- On September 2, the LWF/BS Board of Directors was set up at the CWM annual meeting in Bukoba, Tanzania.
- During the year, possible sites for the transmitter station were surveyed.
- In September Dr. Aske took up residence in Addis Ababa. His appointment had been extended for an indefinite period.
- In the course of planning the technical facilities, it was discovered that the estimated capital investment had to be increased by more than 100%.
- December 12-18, an attempt to overthrow the Ethiopian Government was foiled.

1961:
- In January, a site for administration and studio buildings was purchased.
- On February 15, the basic agreement between the Ethiopian Government and LWF/BS was signed.
- In early September, a building contract was signed with the Italian firm Aldo Ugolotti.
- On October 25, the transmitter site was handed over to LWF by the IBTE.
- On October 31, test broadcasts with a 1Kw SW transmitter began.

1962:
- In mid-May, the erection of antenna towers started.
- May 21-29, an important joint consultation between Parties A and B was held in Addis Ababa, when a number of unresolved questions were discussed and misunderstandings straightened out.
- On August 18, the "Paris Consultation" was convened by the WCC/DWME Director, Lessley Newbegin, with an aim to review and widen the ecumenical cooperation in the radio project.
- In September, Brown Boveri and Co. donated a 1 Kw MW transmitter to LWF.

1962: (cont'd)
- Eight area studios were getting ready for program production. Optimism that they would be successful was expressed.

1963:
- On January 12-16, the constitutional meeting of CCIB was held in Addis Ababa and the new organization assumed the Party B function.
- On February 26, RVOG was officially inaugurated in the presence of the Emperor and high government and church officials. Only one of the two transmitters could be switched on.
- To clarify working relations with the Ministry of Information a "Protocol of Agreement" was negotiated and signed on March 28.
- On May 5, the second transmitter was in operation.
- Only six area studios were able to meet the deadline. At the end of the year, RVOG was broadcasting 10½ hours per day in six languages.
- As of September, the MW transmitter was in operation.

1964:
- Working relations with Party B had developped well and in January CCIB was ready to turn over the staff houses on the RVOG campus, which were built with NECC funds, to RVOG without compensation. The Party B office at the station was closed.
- Broadcasting in Farsi, Hindi and Nyanja started and daily SW broadcasts increased from 10½ to 13½ hours.
- Regular news bulletins in Arabic started in addition to the earlier three languages.
- The operating costs increased this year by 57.4% and reached almost half a million US dollars.

1965:
- At the LWF/BS meeting in Jerusalem in April, it was proposed that LWF/BS communication offices should be opened in Hongkong and Tokyo which meant that LWF/BS was moving in the direction of a global operation.
- In July, the antenna construction was completed.
- After a controversy over the news service in Arabic, the transmission of news bulletins in Arabic were discontinued in mid-year.
- Broadcasts in Hausa for West Africa began.
- MW added daily news bulletins in French.
- An extension of the administration building was completed.

APPENDIX II

1966: - In 1965 it had already been announced that CCIB should be reorganized into a global operation, and as of January 1966 CCCB assumed the CCIB responsibilities as Party B.

- In April, the NECC informed CCCB of its decision to withdraw from the cooperation with RVOG at the earliest possible date. CCCB acted very wisely and all negative effects were averted.

- The question of relationship between WACB and CCCB was raised by Dr. Philip Potter, WCC.

- Broadcasting in Fulfulde and French began on SW and this increased the daily transmissions from 13½ to 18 hours; MW increased its transmissions from four to five hours per day.

- Daily newscasts increased from 10 to 13 of which seven were in English and four in French.

- The Far East communication offices were operational as of this year.

1967: - In February, the LWF/BS General Director's office was moved from Addis Ababa to Geneva, and Pastor Paul Volz replaced Dr. Aske as RVOG Director.

- There was an unusual turn-over of executive staff.

- Broadcasts in Nyanja were dropped and daily newscasts in Hindi began.

1968: - Relations with the Ethiopian Government had suddenly deteriorated due to reshuffling in Cabinet. The new Minister of Information demanded closer control on domestic news and religious programs broadcast to Ethiopia.

- Hard negotiations resulted in a second "Protocol of Agreement", signed on January 27. The Liaison Officer, Yilma Gebre World, was given a broader mandate and placed at the station.

- In June, the WACB was reorganized at the Oslo Assembly into the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

- On June 28, the merger betwen WACC and CCCB took place and WACC assumed the Party B responsibilities vis-à-vis RVOG.

- The South African area studio was closed down.

- Broadcasts to China began.

1968: (cont'd)
- Transmission of regular French programs on MW began. MW transmissions increased from five to six hours per day.
- Daily newscasts in Hausa began.
- On October 8, an agreement was signed with the EECMY which released RVOG from the responsibility for production of Amharic programs.

1969:
- The LWF Executive Committee appointed a Task Force on Mass Communication consisting of a team of international experts on communication, with Dr. John W. Bachman as chairman.
- A joint LWFBS/WACC application for financial assistance from the church-related development agency - KED - in Germany was submitted.
- Due to the civil war in Nigeria the LH area studio at Enugu was abandoned. Program production was moved to Jos on a temporary basis.
- Daily transmissions on MW reached a peak of 6½ hours.
- LWF/BS Executive Committee authorized the establishment of a Department of Audience Research and Planning (DARP).

1970:
- Pastor Ernst Bauerochse replaced Pastor Paul Volz as RVOG Director.
- Bauerochse initiated a review of the entire salary scale for RVOG employees.
- WACC changed the policy of contribution to RVOG from cost-sharing to a block grant. This, together with other factors, constituted a financial crisis.
- Transmission to Sri Lanka was discontinued.

1971:
- First grant from KED was received.
- Newscasts in Fulfulde began. Together with additional bulletins in English and French, daily newscasts increased from 16 to 19.
- The question of restructuring the LWF and the status of LWF/BS was extensively discussed, but it was decided to await the recommendations of the Task Force before taking any action.

APPENDIX II

1972:
- In April, a delegation from the Roman Catholic "Voice of Africa" consortium visited RVOG to explore the possibilities of cooperation.
- The Task Force Report was presented to the LWF Executive Committee at its meeting in Indonesia from July 10-20.
- Broadcasting on SW reached its peak of 7.373 hours for the entire year, or 20½ hours per day.
- Area studio directors assumed full responsibility for broadcast editing.
- An extensive audience survey was carried out in Ethiopia by the new Department on Audience Research and Planning.

1973:
- On February 26, the RVOG 10th anniversary was celebrated in the presence of the Emperor and in conjunction with the Studio Directors' Conference.
- In February, a permanent LWFBS/WACC Coordinating Committee was set up and the first meeting was held in Gothenburg, Sweden, from November 7-9.
- Operating costs surpassed one million US dollars.
- A new cafeteria building was completed.
- A small audience survey was done in Kenya by a commercial firm in which also RVOG was included.

1974:
- In late January and early February there was considerable political unrest in Ethiopia.
- At the end of February the Prime Minister and his Cabinet was forced to resign.
- In July, Dr. Sigurd Aske was replaced as General Director by Pastor Marc Chambron and the RVOG Director, Pastor Ernst Bauerochse, was replaced by Pastor Manfred Lundgren.
- The political unrest continued and it became clear that the country was heading towards a deep-going socio-political revolution.
- On September 12, the Emperor was dethroned and detained.
- On September 13, the military PMAC took power.
- On November 23, summary executions shocked the nation and the world. RVOG was in a deep crisis.

1975:

- On February 21-23, an LWF/BS delegation, together with the RVOG leadership, had constructive talks with the authorities.
- RVOG continued normal operations throughout the year in an abnormal situation.
- In November an important consultation on long range planning was held at RVOG.
- The station enjoyed new administrative facilities and a new freedom in many respects, at the same time as uncertainty prevailed.
- The news operation which had been administred by the Program Department was upgraded to a Department of its own.
- Plans to decentralize the operation were discussed and regional studio directors' conferences were arranged in Asia and Africa, instead of the traditional conferences at the station.
- The proposal to replace LWF/BS by a Committee on Communication, combining all communication activities of the LWF had been studied in 1973 and 1974 and was recommended by all parties concerned. At its meeting in Amsterdam in August, the LWF Executive Committee approved the proposal and established an Office of Communication placed in the General Secretariat; RVOG was, therefore, transferred from LWF/CCC to this new Office.

1976:

- In March, the political tension increased and disturbances in and around the city made it necessary to plan for an emergency situation.
- Demands to adjust programming to the new political reality of the country resulted in an extended dialogue between RVOG and the Ministry of Information which ended with a "discussion forum" on November 22. It was then clear that RVOG could not continue much longer.
- In the meantime, RVOG had enjoyed relative freedom to operate without interference.
- On October 1-14, an international seminar on cross-cultural communication of the Christian message was arranged at RVOG together with the United Bible Societies and the Afrolit Society in Nairobi.

APPENDIX II

1977: - On February 3, Lt. Col. Mengestu Hailemariam took power in a bloody coup at the Old Palace.

- From that date all working relations with the Government were cut off and RVOG operated in a "political vacuum".

- On March 12, at 5.15 a.m. troops moved in and seized the radio station....

INDEX OF PERSONS

ABRAHA, Gedamu	p. 249
ABRAHAM, Emmanuel	pp. 39,42,55,92
ADEBO, Tarekegn	p. 232
ALEMU, Meba Sillassie	p. 142
ANDOM, Aman Michael	pp. 236,237
ASFA WOSSEN, Merid Azmatch	p. 236
ASKE, Sigurd	pp. 16,29,30,33,34,41,47,53,54,56,57,60,73,78, 79,81,82,83,91,92,102,106,115,132,133,134, 138,142,143,150,151,152,153,154,159,166, 167,168,171,175,176,183,190,191,198,200, 211,214,216,220,221,230
BACHMAN, John W.	pp. 202,210,227
BADEJO, Victor	pp. 106,170
BAETA, Christian	p. 268
BAGLO, Ferdinand	pp. 6,102,178,180,202,210,213,218,222
BARRETT, David	pp. 276,277
BAUEROCHSE, Ernst	pp. 106,108,142,143,159,181,226,230,244
BECHER, Peter	pp. 106,196
BENETTSSON, Holger	p. 249
BENTI, Teferi	p. 237
BIRKELI, Fridtjov	pp. 12,16,30,31,33,35,36,47,113,132,148,278
BLAIR, Michael	pp. 159,170,183
BLOCK, Ernst	p. 18
CAPPS, Walter	p. 18
CARPENTER, George	pp. 125,127,131,138,215
CHAMBRON, Marc	pp. 163,183,205,218,230,238,244,245,248,253, 255,258
CHIRGWIN, A.M.	p. 21
DAVIDSON, Basil	pp. 20,264,267
DESTA, Asrat	pp. 239,246

APPENDIX III

DINKE, Berhanu p. 55

DOMINIQUE, Samuel p. 6

DORMAN, Harry pp. 14,41

EBERHARD, Paul p. 183

EKNOR, Ingvar p. 58

ELSEBUTANGEN, Reidar p. 219

ENDRESEN, H. p. 79

ESAYAS, Menkir pp. 8,16,29,30,73,74,78,106,170,178,179,186, 206,207,213,218,219,232

FICK, Ulrich pp. 57,106,157,167,170,175,176,178,180,182, 186,188,189,200,213,220

FISCHER, Harold pp. 14,49,58

FRANZEN, Allan pp. 7,26,28,152

FREYTAG, Walter p. 21

FRY, Franklin Clark pp. 53,60,92,93,135,152

GABRE SILLASSIE, Emmanuel pp. 38,39,40,42,47,57,140,233,235

GARDINER, Robert p. 144

GEBRE WOLD, Yilma. p. 235

GEISENDORFER, Robert p. 237

GJELSTEN, Gudmund pp. 57,167,198,199,201,204

GOBANA, Kebede pp. 68,106,280

GUDMUNDSEN, Bernhardur pp. 154,201,210

HABTE WOLD, Aklilou p. 233

HAILE, Minasse pp. 141,142

HAILEMARIAM, Mengestu pp. 239,253

HAILE SELASSIE (Emperor) pp. 35,39,40,41,42,48,52,53,55,85,92,136,142, 143,229,231,232,233,234,235,236,240,241

HAMELINK, Cees pp. 8,223,281

HEAD, Sidney W. p. 27

HELLBERG, Carl-Johan pp. 237,238

HOEKENDIJK, J.C. p. 272

IMRU, Michael pp. 234,236,239

IRRENA, Yohannes p. 106

JACOBS, George	p. 279
JACOBSEN, J.J.	p. 52
JAHN, Christoph	pp. 138,139
JØRGENSEN, Knud	pp. 8,106,160,166,168,170,179,181,183,225,226, 227,228
JOHNSON, Philip	pp. 130,131,133,138
KARKKAINEN, Marjatta	p. 179
KENNEDY, Reginald	pp. 7,27,38,102,103,223
KIDANE WOLD, Teffera Work	pp. 42,52
KRAEMER, Erich	pp. 57,68,106,216
KRAMER, Hendrik	pp. 25,202,270
KRAMP, Flemming	pp. 251,259
KRARUP, Niels Thure	p. 211
KUSHNER, James M.	pp. 7,102,103,114,123,166,195,196,202,210,213
LAGU, Joseph	p. 144
LALIVE & BUDIN	pp. 245,253,254
LEGESSE, Hagos	pp. 56,186
LEGUM, Collin	pp. 20,264
LILJE, Hanns	pp. 26,278
LUBEN, M.	p. 82
LUIDENS, Edwin	pp. 51,81,82
LUNDGREN, Manfred	pp. 106,157,227,230 (cf. also pp. 234,235,242, 246,247,251,254)
MAKONNEN, Endalkatchew	pp. 233,234
MÅNSON, Thorsten	pp. 57,106
MAO TSE TUNG	p. 19
MAU, Carl Jr.	pp. 249,253
MBODWAM, Dick	p. 183
MEYER, Heinrich	pp. 47,91
MORITZEN, Niels P.	p. 139
M'TIMKULU, Donald	p. 83
NASH, Margeret	pp. 22,23
NEWBIGIN, Lesslie	pp. 51,271
NEWELL, Arthur	p. 106

APPENDIX III

OFSTAD, Jon Egil	pp. 106,160,170
OGBA EGZY, Dawit	p. 42
PACHE, André	p. 183
PAIN, Hugh	pp. 106,196
PERERA, Dick	p. 281
POTTER, Philip	pp. 131,133
ROBERTSON, Edwin	pp. 131,132
RUUD, Lee Gordon	pp. 7,149,150,151
SCHAEFER, Herbert	pp. 38,39,40,41,52,53,54,55,57,59
SCHERER, James	pp. 271,274,276
SCHIOTZ, Fredrik A.	pp. 11,35,37,47,92,125
SCHMIDT, Joachim	pp. 8,28,223
SCHMIDT-CLAUSEN, Kurt	p. 47
SENZIG, R.	p. 210
SITHOLE, Ndabaningi	p. 265
SOLTAU, T. Stanley	p. 21
SOVIK, Arne	pp. 33,39,47
SPENCER, John	p. 54
STEWART, Kenneth	pp. 106,199
TADDESE, Tesfaye	pp. 239,243
TALIADOROS, Constantin	p. 254
TEKLEHAWARIAT, Girmatchew	p. 141
THEOPHILOS, Abuna	p. 239
THIEMAN, Eugene	p. 183
THOMPSON, Allan	pp. 56,66,73,78
TOFFLER, Alvin	p. 18
VALDES, Vivo	p. 232
VAN DEUSEN, Robert	pp. 6,10,13,26,30,37,38,41,42,43,49,70,103,104 126,130,136,138,158,160,161,196,204,212,213
VISSER T'HOOFT, W.A.	p. 22
VOLZ, Paul M.	pp. 106,141,162,198,199,200,203,204,209

APPENDIX III

WARREN, Max	p. 267
WESTERLUND, David	p. 267
WILLEBRANDS, Jan	p. 23
WORKNEH, Habte Mariam	p. 85

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

1. ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR REFERENCES TO SOURCES:

LWF/BS	The Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service
LWF/BS.B	LWF/BS Board of Directors
LWF/BS.EC	LWF/BS Executive Committee
a.	Agenda
m.	Minutes

(Example: LWF/BS.EC.m.1962:2 = The LWF/BS Executive Committee Minutes 1962, page 2)

2. GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS USED:

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBCo	Brown Boveri & Co.
CARAVS	Christian Association of Radio and Audio-Visual Services
CACS	Christian Arts and Communication Services
CCAF	Coordinating Committee of Armed Forces (Ethiopian military unit 1974)
CCN	Christian Council of Nigeria
CTF	Communication Training Fund (LWF/COC)
CORDAC	Corporation de Radiodiffusion de l'Afrique Centrale
CUFA	Communication Unit for Africa (LWF/COC)
CCCCA	Coordinating Committee for Christian Communication in Africa
CCIB	Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Broadasting
CCCB	Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting
DPA	Deutsche Presse Agentur

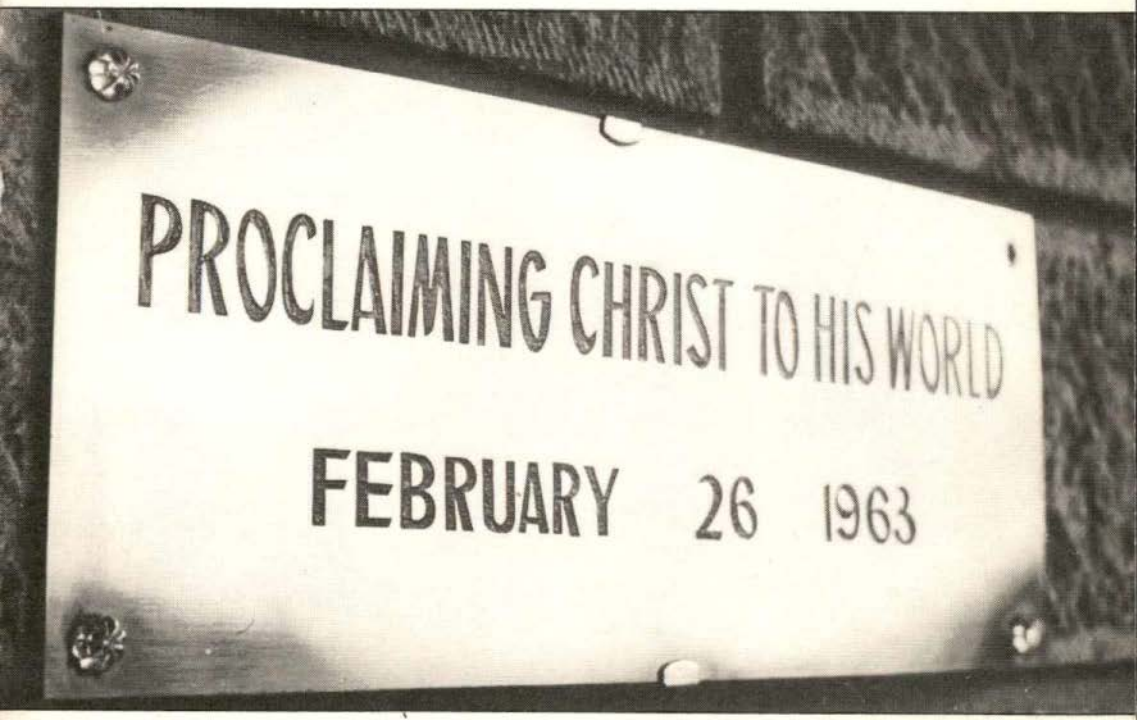
APPENDIX IV

EACC	East Asia Christian Conference
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa (UN)
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
ELWA	Sudan Interior Mission's radio station in Liberia (interpretation: Eternal Love Wins Africa)
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EOM	Ethiopian Orthodox Mission
FEBA	Far East Broadcasting Association
FEBC	Far East Broadcasting Corporation
FEMEC	Fédération des Eglises et Missions Evangéliques du Cameroun
IBTE	Imperial Board of Telecommunications in Ethiopia
ICB	International Christian Broadcasters
IMC	International Missionary Council
KED	Kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst (German Development Agency)
LCA	Lutheran Church in America
LCE	Lutheran Church in Ethiopia
LCN	Lutheran Church of Nigeria
LCCN	Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
LH	Lutheran Hour
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWF/BS	Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service
LWF/EC	Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee
LWF/COC	LWF Committee (Commission) on Communication
LWF/DOC	LWF Department of Communication
LWF/CWM	LWF Commission on World Mission
LWF/DWM	LWF Department of World Mission
MW	Medium Wave
NBC	Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation
NECC	Near East Christian Council
NECCRAVCO	Near East Christian Council's Radio and Audio Visual Committee

OAU	Organization for African Unity
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council (Ethiopia)
RAVEMCCO	Radio, Audio-Visual and Mass Communication Committee of the National Council of Churches in the USA
SEARV	South-East Asia Radio Voice
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
SW	Short Wave
TWR	Trans World Radio
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WABA	West African Broadcasting Association
WACC	World Association for Christian Communication
WACC/DCRC	WACC Department of Church Related Communication
WACB	World Association for Christian Broadcasting (later WACC)
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCC/DWME	WCC Department of World Mission and Evangelism
WCMR	World Conference on Missionary Radio (later ICB)
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WRTH	World Radio TV Handbook

RVOG Staff

In the end, more than 200 people worked for RVOG. Above left: The last station director (1974 – 77) and author of this book Manfred Lundgren. Above right: The first station director Sigurd Aske and technical director Erich Kraemer with a map of the station's service areas. Below: An RVOG technical instructor visiting the area studio and staff in Antsirabe, Madagascar.



The emblem of RVOG and the plaque at the entrance to the main building bearing the station's motto. The plaque was one of the few things saved when the station was nationalized and is now kept by the LWF in Geneva.